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MUCH TO BLAME.

A TALE.

BY A CELEBRATED AUTHOR.

"Lessons of wisdom have never so much power over us as when they are wrought into the heart through the ground-work of some story which interests our passions."—STERNE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MUCH TO BLAME.

CHAPTER I.

Sir George Villeroy, Bart. married his first wife for love, his second for money. The first was taken from him when his only surviving child, a daughter, was ten years old, and he loved this living semblance of his first wife with so strong an affection, that he would not probably have married again, had not the unexpected derangement of his affairs made it desirable to him to accept the pecuniary assistance, which was all but offered to him by Miss Elizabeth Badderly. Sir George was so indolent and careless a man that his steward was able to defraud him of a very large sum of money; and this loss obliged

him either to alter his manner of living, to a very painful degree, to leave his country, or to accumulate debts. The first was repugnant to his love of indulgence, the second to his love of his country, the third to his love of integrity. An advantageous marriage was another resource, and Miss Badderly, a faded beauty, nearly on the verge of forty, who was said to live single for his sake, expressed such excessive sorrow for his losses, and such affection for his little Julia, that he could not but believe she would willingly repair the former with her fortune, and be a mother to the latter. Nor was the lady slow to convince him that his conjectures were right; and she bestowed on him herself and her three thousand a year as soon as he asked for them, taking care, however, to stipulate for a handsome jointure, ample pin-money, and a large provision for younger children.

Lady Villeroy was now at the height of her wishes. She had never felt affection but for two persons—herself and Sir George Villeroy, whose attentions on her

first entering the world had seemed to vacillate between her and his first wife, Lady Julia Mordaunt; therefore, however she might caress the poor Julia, she, in her heart, disliked her, as the child of the woman whom she had always envied, and who had, she thought, robbed her of her lover, and also, as a rival in Sir George's affection. But when the point was gained, the mask was thrown off, and Sir George soon discovered that the child, who, till the age of ten years, had been used to unlimited indulgence, would now be curtailed of what he considered as even necessary recreations, and would be under the rigid control, of a severe task-master. At first parental affection urged him to interfere, but indolence, increasing indolence, forced him to acquiesce—as he could not but own that his best friends had told him he was spoiling Julia, and Lady Villeroy was continually assuring him that all her severity was intended for the child's good; there were other beings yet unborn, for whose welfare Lady Villeroy was equally solici-

tous—namely, her own future progeny; and while she was constantly, though vainly, imagining that a male heir would in due time be born to the house of Villeroy, she was always talking of the necessity of curtailing all unnecessary expences, in order to be provided for the maintenance of the large family which she might one day have; and poor Sir George found only, too late, that he had better have retrenched, and remained single, than have given up his usual enjoyments, and his liberty of action also. But it was easier to yield than to resist, and as his lady did not abridge him of his usual quantity of wine, or his nap after dinner, he tried to forget that no servants would stay in his family, because they had not enough to eat, and to think that Lady Villeroy was right in resolving to give a useful, rather than a fashionable education to his daughter; on this system she hired a governess for Julia who undertook to teach her grammar and needle-work only, and enough of the French language to enable

her to teach it to her little brothers and sisters when they should arrive. At their leisure hours the governess and Julia were expected to assist Lady Villeroy in working for the family, knitting rugs, bed-side carpets, and so forth. Lady Villeroy being what is commonly called a notable managing woman, and some persons more just than elegant, used to bestow on her the common, vulgar appellation of a nip, or a skin-flint—that is an avaricious, mean woman. Hitherto poor Julia had slept in the largest room on the second floor, both in the town and country house; but now that room was to be set apart for a nursery, and she and the governess, a well-born woman, "whose poverty, but not her will," consented to be an inmate of this establishment, were obliged to sleep in a small and almost unwholesome room adjoining. The dress, too, of Julia underwent a gradual, but complete metamorphosis; Julia was inclined to be both tall and fat for her age; and on pretence of tightening her into a proper shape, the child wore

high stiff stays, so narrow in front that the fine open chest, which nature gave her, was wholly obscured; her shoulders thrown up in an unhealthy and ungraceful manner; while her mother-in-law was often lamenting how shockingly ill-made, and how very high shouldered her poor dear Julia was; then, her hair was represented as having such a tendency to be dirty, that it was necessary it should be cut close to her head; and those luxuriant auburn ringlets, which had once been the pride of both her parents, were so completely annihilated as soon as Lady Villeroy assumed her reign, that Sir George could not help stamping his foot with vexation, and almost muttering an oath when he first beheld the change; indeed, Julia was at length so completely altered by want of her accustomed exercise and recreation, by her ugly dress, and her cropped hair, that the likeness to her mother, which made her odious to Lady Villeroy because it endeared her to Sir George, was entirely annihilated; and

the mortified father used to exclaim, when Julia made her low and awkward curtsey at the door, as she left the room, "Well, I am so disappointed, I really believe that girl will make a plain woman after all;" and he retained this opinion even when Julia had attained her fifteenth year; though he could not help declaring, even in her presence, spite of the frown of his wife, that she was at least a fine grown girl, though very narrow chested and high shouldered. No wonder, as spite of her rapid growth the poor girl was forced to wear her frocks two years, till they became at length so short, that decency as well as grace were violated in her appearance; but Lady Villeroy was at length urged to bestow a deep flounce on these old habiliments, by the jealous pain which an observation of Sir George's occasioned her.

"Really, my dear," said he, "Julia's petticoats would be frightfully short were it not for the excessive beauty of her feet and ankles, which remind me forcibly of her poor mother."

Jealousy immediately conquered avarice, and Julia and Miss Brightwen, the governess, were desired to lengthen the frocks with all possible expedition. Meanwhile, though Julia's mind and talents remained uncultivated, her heart and her temper were in a state of progressive improvement. The temper of few children, who had been indulged in all their wishes till the age of ten, could have escaped utter destruction when such indulgence was succeeded by severity and privations; but as Julia's temper was so good that it had not been much injured, even by pernicious indulgence, it was enabled to resist the nearly as fatal power of severity, by the counteraction which the influence of the governess proved to that of the mother. Sophia Brightwen had known better days—and fortune smiled deceitful in her birth. Her father, soon after her good and pious mother was taken from him, was so embarrassed by his own extravagance that he was found to sell his estates; with what remained after his debts were paid, he

entered into a business in which he only just escaped bankruptcy, and, like Sir George Villeroy, had been induced to marry for money; but unlike Sir George he speculated with the money thus obtained, which so irritated the temper of his wife, that his children could not live in the house with her, and he himself was obliged to own that it was necessary they must try to maintain themselves; accordingly, his daughters were forced to leave home, and the elder was induced to marry for a maintenance, and became miserable and indigent for life; the younger, Sophia, was glad to accept the situation of governess to Julia Villeroy, with a scanty salary, and on conditions which pride and avarice only could have imposed, and despondíng poverty have accepted.

But Sophia bore her lot with unrepining patience; she had early learned to cast her cares on her Creator, and when her father proved a beggar, and her lover, in consequence of it, forsook her, and married a richer maiden, Sophia remembered

there was one in heaven who loved her; and she learned at length to smile amidst her sorrows. When she became an inmate of Sir George Villeroy's house, she felt great sympathy with the situation of poor Julia.

Julia, like herself, was the object of a mother-in-law's tyranny and dislike, and she endeavoured by her affectionate soothings to heal the wounded feelings of the irritated and suffering girl. She told her also the story of her own sorrows, and while Julia listened to it, she saw in it such a resemblance to her own distress, that the relater naturally became endeared to her, and she was always impatient when the few hours in a day which she passed in Lady Villeroy's apartments became fewer; and fewer they very soon became, as Lady Villeroy said Sir George's frequent attacks of the gout made him unable to bear the excitement of the presence even of his own child. Julia had loved her father tenderly, and she loved him still; but as she was now forbidden the usual testimonies of his fondness, her pleasure in being with him

was destroyed, and she found the society of her governess a refuge. Soon also it became a blessing to her, for the simple, unobtrusive, but heart-felt piety which enabled Miss Brightwen to endure with cheerful patience the hardships of her lot, was not lost upon the sensitive mind of her pupil; even though her governess could not teach her accomplishments, she was able to instruct her in those truths, without which all other teaching is vain, and thus enabled her to bear the "crook in her lot" with humble resignation.

Yet, though Julia was denied the means of learning either music or drawing, her talents for them shewed and indulged themselves in spite of all opposition; her room was decorated with cheap prints, on which she expended part of her small allowance, and which she endeavoured to copy in her few moments of leisure from her heavy tasks of working for the indulgence of Lady Villeroy's necessities, fancies, or parsimony; and the face of Miss Brightwen, in various views,

was to be seen in every part of the room, ill-drawn indeed, but so like as to shew that her talent for drawing was worthy of cultivation. At dusk, both the governess and the pupil might be seen leaning out of their window, listening with eager delight to the hand-organ playing in the adjacent square, and there was not a tune on the barrel which Julia could not sing by heart, almost as soon as she heard it, and with which she did not make vocal the fields round her father's mansion in the country, when she was sure that no echo could bring it to the ear of Lady Villeroy. But this was a pleasure of which she was now entirely deprived, for as there was a degree of hospitality and generous living requisite to Sir George's situation in life in the country, which did not suit the narrow spirit and saving ways of Lady Villeroy, she contrived to alarm Sir George's fear for his health so much, that she made him think it dangerous for him to remove from the immediate vicinity of his London physician and their house in Gloucester-

place became at length their only residence. Consequently, as Lady Villeroy could not, or would not spare a footman to walk behind Miss Villeroy and her governess, and she had been told by persons of whose opinion she stood in awe, that Julia was too tall and womanly to walk without one, the garden in Portman-square was the boundary of poor Julia's walk, and those cheeks which had glowed with the roses of health while she could enjoy the air and exercise of the country, now became pale and lifeless from confinement at her needle, and from want of relaxation and exertion. At length, however, the governess and pupil obtained leave to walk out for an hour or two before breakfast toward the Regent's Park, and by their rapid pace, the prisoners always endeavoured to make as much of this opportunity as possible. One morning as they were going along this favourite road, they heard a hand-organ at a distance, and Julia could not resist her inclination to follow it, in order to listen to it more at

her ease than she had hitherto done; in vain her governess was representing to her that she was going too far, when, at this moment a dog of a very suspicious appearance came staggering along the road, and Miss Brightwen catching hold of Julia's arm, pulled her forcibly back, exclaiming, "that dog is mad, let us get over this gate instantly!" but before Julia could reach the gate, retreating backwards for the greater safety, the dog directed his steps towards her, and was on the very point of springing on her, when a gentleman, who was passing in a gig, jumped out, and seizing the animal by the nape of the neck, held him struggling in his grasp, conjuring Julia to climb over the gate instantly lest the animal should get loose; but Miss Brightwen vainly attempted to persuade her to go further than the top bar of the gate. She saw the evident danger of her preserver, whose hold of the dog grew every moment weaker, and she could not stir from the spot, but remained motionless in fearful expectation of the

consequences. At length some men who had been sent in pursuit of the dog, came up, threw a noose over his neck, and saved the gentleman from a fate which became unavoidable; and he was turning to speak to Julia, when, on looking round, he saw that his horse had burst from the hold of his groom, and was running down the road dragging his gig against the hedge, and in momentary danger of overturning it. Accordingly, he immediately joined in the pursuit himself, and soon disappeared from their view. But Julia continued to gaze after him, indulging a hope he would return, till Miss Brightwen insisted on her setting off for home immediately, or they would be too late for breakfast, and they should not be allowed to walk out again. Julia reluctantly complied, the more so, because the men who had pursued the dog, and others who had joined them, were loud in praise of the gentleman's intrepidety in seizing so powerful an animal at the evident risk of his own life. "He is a gallant fellow, I know," said one of

the men, " I forget his name, he is a captain in the navy, and some lord's son :" but Julia, though willing to linger still to listen to this conversation, was urged forward when another man said, " Well my dear, he saved your life, that is a sure thing, and I do not wonder you look so pale and so frightful, nor that other person neither, shall I give you an arm ?" This offer they civilly, but hastily declined, and with tottering, but rapid steps they returned to Gloucester-place. When they arrived they luckily reached their own apartment unquestioned; but the terror which Miss Brightwen had undergone, on Julia's account, threw her into a fainting fit, which put Lady Villeroy to the expence of so much hartshorn and sal volatile, that she declared they should never go out of the garden into the square again. A sad hearing for Julia, who had secretly resolved to go every morning to the same spot, being more alive to the hope of seeing her preserver than to the fear of meeting another mad dog.

Miss Brightwen thought the hope more unfounded than the fear, and was not sorry that, for the present at least, their morning ramble was forbidden; and, for the first time, Julia found her governess not disposed to sympathise in her feelings. "But, you forget, surely, that he saved my life, and how ungrateful I must be not to wish to see him again!" was Julia's constant reply, when Miss Brightwen disapproved her desire of revisiting the scene of her danger; however, Julia was always appeased, when she readily owned that, as far as her fright allowed her to judge, the gentleman was tall and handsome, and of his courage there could be no doubt: "Who knows," she used to add, and that always made her peace, "who knows, but you may see him one day when you least expect it." But Sophia soon found that Julia had little pleasure in talking on any other subject, and that she seemed to dwell with never ceasing satisfaction on the remembrance of this only marked event in her life.

This circumstance alarmed the conscientious governess; for, as she was not at all aware that Julia had ever read books which treated on the subject of love and adventures, she began to fear that she had herself prepared her young heart to receive this strong and, perhaps, dangerous impression, by telling her the history of her own unfortunate attachment. Her acquaintance with her lover had first begun, in his having saved her from an enraged cow; and she had once given her a detail of all her love, all her injuries; but then it was only once, as he was married, and even to think of him was become criminal; still, it had been once too much, for the conversation had made an indelible impression on its hearer: as, before he married his second wife, her father had allowed her to read whatever his library contained, and though she was only ten years old, the ideas of love, of lovers, first-sight attachment, and adventures, faded away from it again for want of being renewed, had not the chances of life presented the real

heroine of a love affair to her in the form of Sophia Brightwen. There, before her eyes, she beheld a love-lorn maid, telling a tale of faithful and hopeless attachment, weeping too as she told it, and looking interesting beyond all description: this reality was far more dangerous than any fiction could have been; and, while Julia listened to the story with many a trickling tear, the governess imputed her sorrow to sympathy alone, unconscious that even her grief made her the object of envy to her young companion, and that she wished to have a lover, a tender grief, an adventurer, and a confidante; and as the story of her love had not long been confided to Julia, when the alarm in the Regent's Park took place, there was an adventure, a young and handsome deliverer, and, perhaps, a lover! at least there was an object to love, and Julia believed she loved--but though she tried to be very unhappy, certainly sighed deeply and audibly; she eat heartily, slept well, and grew fat, in spite of her wounded heart. Still she certainly thought too

much of her preserver, but she was, beginning to admit, that he was probably married, for Miss Brightwen was continually saying that she might never see him again; that it was very evident he was not much interested in them, or he would have returned to enquire how they did after he had caught his horse, and as this last observation had more weight than the others, Julia was beginning to talk, and even to think less of the generous unknown, when a new event in her life promised to obliterate the remembrance of it entirely.

CHAP. II.

Lady Julia Villeroy (Julia's mother) was the daughter of the Earl and Countess of Beltravers; and the countess, on the death of her first husband, married the Earl of Pakenham, who was a widower, and, as well as herself, had an only daughter;—these children grew up with the most affectionate regard for each other; in process of time one of them married Sir George Villeroy, and the other Lord Stanmore, afterwards Earl of Erpingham; their friendship continued unimpaired till the death of Lady Julia Villeroy; and Lady Helena Fortescue, the daughter of Lady Erpingham, who was only some months, older than Julia, was her frequent playfellow, and the guest of her mother. The children also were accustomed to call each other's mother aunt, and their husbands' uncle, though no relationship subsisted

between them; but affection loves to make ties as close as it possibly can, and Lady Villeroy and Lady Erpingham loved to address each other by the name of sister; they were also pleased to be addressed by their children in the language of near kindred, while they delighted to behold the affection which subsisted between them. But when Lady Julia died, and Sir George married again, all frequent intercourse between the families ceased, and Julia and Lady Helena met no more, for Lady Villeroy always remembered that the latter was an indulged and high-spirited child, therefore not a suitable companion for her already too much petted daughter-in-law, and every invitation to Erpingham-place was peremptorily forbidden. This refusal distressed Lady Erpingham, and enraged Lady Helena; but the latter could not forget the companion of her happy childhood, and as Lady Helena and her father were coming to London unexpectedly on business, after an uninterrupted residence there of some years in

the country, on account of Lady Erpingham's ill health, which made country air necessary to preserve her life. Lord Erpingham wrote a letter to Sir George, to announce his intention of calling on him very soon, accompanied by his daughter.

"What, is this Lord Erpingham coming to London on business for a few days, and meaning to call on me!" cried Sir George as he perused the letter: "Lady Villeroy, we must write and ask them to come hither."

"Come hither!" not for the world!" she replied, turning pale with apprehension; "consider the state of your health, my love; that rude, spoiled girl would riot you to death in a day."

"Nonsense! she is a young woman now, and, I dare say, is as quiet as Julia—they must come hither, indeed; remember our near connexion, my poor wife was no relation at all to the Erpingham's."

"That is all stuff, Sir George, let hem go to the hotel—they can afford it,

and we have not a house fit to receive lords and ladies, and servants fit to cook for and wait on them."

"Then, why have we not, Lady Villeroy?" said Sir George, with more than his usual spirit.

"Why not? because we cannot afford it to be sure, and lay by what we ought of our income for unforeseen emergencies." She no longer dared to say, as she used to do, "for the sake of younger children," as they, though foreseen, were certainly not now likely to be really seen.

"Nonsense!" cried Sir George, petulantly, "what emergencies have we to dread now that ought to prevent me from opening my house to an old friend!"

"An old friend, Sir George, is one thing, but a peer of the realm is another."

"'Sdeath! madam, do you mean to say a lord cannot be a friend? what do you mean, madam, with your mysterious objections?"

"I mean that a lord cannot be entertained as easily and cheaply as a friend who is not noble."

"Cheaply! I do not want any friend of mine to be so entertained at my house, Lady Villeroy, and I shall write to tell them."

"They cannot come hither," she replied coldly and firmly, "for it is utterly impossible! The hangings of the best bed are taken down and papered up. The next best bed is down, posts and all; we have but one house-maid, and, in short, it is impossible."

Sir George was silenced for awhile, though not convinced by this reasoning, as an upholsterer could soon restore the beds to their original state. Another servant might be hired, and dinners could be procured from an hotel. But he had now acquired such a habit of yielding, and he was so pleased, so flattered, when Lady Villeroy replied to his expostulations by bursting into tears, and throwing her fine arms round his neck, assuring him all she

did was to preserve his precious life, for she knew if Lord Erpingham came to the house, he would drink himself into a fit of the gout in the stomach, that at length she reconciled him to her views, and he allowed her to write the following letter to the earl under his dictation :—

MY DEAR LORD,

It gives me the greatest pleasure to think I shall see you so soon; but I am grieved to my very soul to be unable to invite you and your charming daughter, Lady Helena, to take up your abode with us. But Lady Villeroy, whose hand I am forced to borrow to write this, and my physicians, are of opinion that my health is not strong enough to admit of any visitors, and that the more dear they are, the worse for me, as I am unable to bear any excitement, and that of the affections less than any other; so that even my daughter Julia's company I am not able often to enjoy. But I shall indulge myself in an hour's conversation with you, and

am always, my dear lord, with affectionate regards to your countess and family,

Your's, very truly,

G. Villeroy.

Lady Villeroy's best compliments.

This letter occasioned poor Sir George many a deep sigh, and a strong expression of regret; but no doubt Lady Villeroy and the physicians knew best, and the letter was sent. But he could not forget the privation, to think he was obliged to submit, and when Julia came in with the dessert as usual, that is, came to eat some of the musty raisins, old cakes, and often unripe fruit, which Lady Villeroy called a dessert, and to drink half a glass of home-made wine; her father could not help telling her how sorry he was that he was too ill to invite Lord Erpingham and Lady Helena Fortescue to the house to stay during their approaching visit to London.

"To London!" cried Julia, thrown off her guard by this news and almost screaming

with delight, "are they coming to London! and shall I see my uncle and cousin?"

"Nonsense! No more your uncle and cousin than they are mine," cried Lady Villeroy.

"But the child has been always used to call them so."

"Then it is high time, Sir George, she should learn to leave off such unbecoming pride, and conceit, and vulgarity."

"Yes, child, yes; Lord Erpingham and Lady Helena Fortescue will be here next week."

"Oh, how glad I am!" cried Julia, but tears were in her eyes.

Sir George, resenting the harsh reproof which had occasioned them, called her to him, and was going to give her a much warmer kiss than usual, when she unfortunately trod on his worst foot, and he could not help pushing her away, as he uttered an exclamation of pain. This was enough to occasion Julia's instant banishment; and the long-suppressed tears now trickled down her cheeks, and declaring

her father had not spirits strong enough to bear the sight of weeping ladies, she was dismissed to her apartment, in spite of Sir George's intercession; but she carried with her the hope that she should soon see her cousin, and was consoled. Lord and Lady Erpingham, their daughter, and their second son, were sitting together, when Sir George's letter arrived.

"Well," said Lord Erpingham, smiling, "does it contain an invitation or not?"

"I think it does," said the countess.

"It ought to do so," said Captain Fortescue.

"And would," cried Lady Helena, "if Lady Villeroy were not his wife."

"Do not be so severe and hasty in your judgment," replied her mother; "what do you know of Lady Villeroy?"

"No good, mamma. But pray read the letter, papa; I see it makes you smile, but not with pleasure."

"Read it aloud, Helena. Just what I expected. Well, but what harm is there

in this letter, my dear? If Sir George be too ill to receive company, that is not Lady Villeroy's fault."

"But is he so?"

"Why should you doubt it? Why doubt his word? I am sure if the physician disapproved Lord Erpingham's having guests at his house, I should forbid them coming. Indeed, you are unjust to poor Lady Villeroy."

"There, that is so like my mother," said Lady Helena, "always making excuses for every one. The other day she was reading Paradise Lost, and, to my great amusement, she began to make excuses for the devil, and called him poor fellow; therefore no wonder she feels so kindly towards his true and lineal descendant."

"Helena, for shame."

"Nay, mamma, in the height and ancienty of the founder of the family, Lady Villeroy would forgive his nature; for you know she is always labouring to prove her family higher than that of my dear aunt

Villeroy, who, living or dead, is equally the object of her envy and jealousy."

"Really, Helena, you are too severe," cried her father; and I am sorry your mother's example is so thrown away on you."

"Her example is not thrown away on me papa; it operates too forcibly. Mamma is so over-candid, that she makes me the contrary. But I will say no more about Lady Villeroy, I will content myself with commenting on uncle Villeroy's letter."

"Better tear that in pieces than his wife's character, Helena."

"Thank you, brother; and, thus authorised, I begin.—'Sincerest pleasure to think I shall see you.' That's true, I dare say;—'and he is grieved, no doubt, not to be able, that is, not to dare to invite us to the house. Charming daughter! that is, of course—physicians think——Pho—Lady Villeroy thinks she is prime doctor and blister-plaister too—can't bear the excitement of the affections, "and so he rarely sees Julia! oh, the odious cunning

of that paragraph! a palpable excuse for the neglect which we shall find the dear girl suffering under:—her father cannot bear her presence. There peeps out the cloven foot;—now, mamma, if you can make an excuse for this maratre."

"Helena, do not call names! the excuse is an obvious one, her husband's ill health; though, I own it is strange, that parents should not always be the better for the company of their children."

"Strange, indeed," cried Lady Helena, throwing her arms round her mother's neck, "there spoke thy own maternal heart, and I do not believe the truth of any part of the letter; do you, papa? do you, Marcus? Mamma, you know, believes every thing, and has money and food still for every mountainous woman that comes to the hall-door; though so many have been safely delivered of pillows and bolsters at the Park gates."

"Saucy girl! but I believe you are right, and that the baronet's lady did not choose to be at the expense of entertain-

ing us;—well, he deserves all he meets with—but that poor dear orphan, Julia; now, my lord and lady, hear my proposal, which is, that we carry off Julia, and bring her back with us."

"The very thing we always intended, my dear," said the countess, "how tenderly I loved her poor mother! and my heart yearns towards this poor girl, who is, I am told, much neglected, and passes her time chiefly with an amiable but incompetent governess."

"Yes; and she is quite a woman now, nearly my age;—she is seventeen and upwards!—why do you laugh, Marcus?"

"To think what a contrast this tyrannised over, and neglected girl exhibits to you, Helena—you, the petted, the spoiled, and the loved of all hearts. Poor thing! do not let her come hither, it will only teach her to feel more severely the misery of her own situation."

"Well then, Marcus, if you feel so much for the misery of her situation, do

not let her go back any more, but give her another home."

Captain Fortescue started, and changed colour, as Lady Helena said this; then giving her a look of melancholy reproof, he suddenly left the room.

"There, Helena! see how you have wounded your brother's feelings," cried Lord Erpingham; "I wish you would think before you speak."

"I did, papa, and therefore I spoke; I meant what I said, believe me."

"But you know it is a subject Marcus cannot bear to be joked upon."

"Nor did I joke; surely, two years is long enough for any spirited man to wear the willow; and, for the sake of a coquetish jilt, is he to renounce marriage, and insist on no one's naming love to him?"

"But, my dear, I know you did not mean to wound his feelings; still you should remember his excessive sensibility."

"Indeed, dear mamma, I cannot help

suspecting, when regret and misery of this nature last so long, that there is a little temper mixed with them—and I want to cure Marcus of these fancies, instead of indulging him in them."

"Temper! Helena! oh, no—it is all feeling, and wounded affection."

"Aye, so you tell him, mamma, and he thinks, therefore, it is amiable to grieve; and so it might be, if he had lost by death a beloved wife or mistress; but so to pine for a heartless wretch, who forsook him almost at the altar for a large jointure; it is not to be endured, and—O dear! there he goes, with folded arms, and looking so sad! I am very sorry now that I said what I did; I must go and make it up with him."

So saying, the affectionate girl went in pursuit of her brother, and, in a short time, they returned arm in arm to the house, though the traces of tears still lingered on the glowing cheek of Lady Helena. Julia, meanwhile, was anticipating with great delight, the pleasure of

seeing Lady Helena Fortescue, little thinking that she was to be invited to return with her to her happy home; such a possibility would have almost rendered her wild with joy; as it was, she found herself unable to pay undivided attention to any thing she did; and whenever she was alone with her governess, she could talk of nothing but Lady Helena, and wonder how she looked, and what she wore: and then the poor thing cast a mournful eye on her own beggarly and old-fashioned wardrobe, to which her mother-in-law, in expectation of Lady Helena's arrival, had added a chintz gown, of a large running pattern, which had been one of the wedding gowns of the first Lady Villeroy's mother, and was now made up with long sleeves, and lengthened by a scant, single flounce of muslin, in order to serve as an afternoon gown for Julia. But, used as Julia was to excessive frugality and the absence of all smartness in her attire, she could not endure the idea of wearing this unusual and old-fashioned dress; but she

was forced to submit to her fate; and though Miss Brightwen assisted her to the utmost in endeavours to improve the rest of her apparel, Julia found that all she could do was to arm herself with patience and humility to the mortifications which her vanity must endure during her young companion's visit.

"But, if she loves me, you know Miss Brightwen, she will not care about my dress," was the oft repeated observation to her affectionate auditor; and the "No to be sure not," her constant reply, was ever welcome, and was at length relied upon; meanwhile, Lady Helena was eagerly anticipating the journey to London; for, having learned to consider Julia Villeroy as the object of her mother-in-law's cruelty and ill usage, her young and generous heart could not rest until she had endeavoured to rescue her awhile from her power.

Lady Helena had considerable powers of mind and an almost intuitive perception of character; and knowledge of human na-

ture, but her feelings were often too strong for her judgment, and her earnest wish to do right, sometimes precipitated her into acting wrong, and led her to mar the cause which she wished to render successful. With the usual rashness and self-confidence of gifted youth, she had a dangerous contempt for the restrictions of worldly prudence, and the usages of society; and as her mother's delicate health had obliged her to consign her from the age of eight to sixteen, to the care of a fond and injudicious grand-mother, Lady Helena, used to command, and taught to believe that her eccentricities were the proofs and the inspirations of genius, was only too apt to act in defiance of salutary caution, and to fancy because her intentions were right, that her mode of executing them could not be wrong. Lady Erpingham beheld her and all her actions with eyes of unqualified admiration; but to Lord Erpingham and her brothers, she was an object of anxiety, as well as love; and they frequently found it necessary to warn the young enthusiast,

that wounding the self-love of those she meant to amend, was not the way to reform them, and that by acting in opposition to the prejudices of the world she might injure herself without benefiting others. Such was the noble girl who now set off for the metropolis with her father, with a heart full of love and pity for the poor Julia, and of virtuous indignation against her mean maratre, as she persisted to call her; and Captain Fortescue thought it expedient to warn her, that if she wished to carry her point, and induce Lady Villeroy to consent to let Julia return with her, she must take care not to let that lady see that she considered herself as a female knight-errant, come to rescue a fair damsel from the castle of a cruel and unrelenting ogress. Lady Helena bore this advice with great sweetness, because she felt its propriety, and she resolved to put a restraint on her feelings for the sake of carrying the point on which her heart was set. Lord and Lady Erpingham had thought it most advisable that she should write to Lady Vil-

leroy, and express her wishes to take Julia back with her, that she might be prepared for leaving home; but Lady Helena, who perfectly knew the character of the lady in question, thought she was most likely to succeed if no time was given for preparation, as in the latter case Julia's wardrobe could not be replenished, and the mother-in-law would have an excuse for not expending money on the daughter-in-law.

"Surely, my dear," said Lord Erpingham, as they went along, "it would have been better for you to have written to express your wish of taking Julia back with you."

"Indeed you are mistaken, papa," she replied; "believe me, I know Lady Villeroy, and I am very sorry that prudence will oblige me to conceal that knowledge from her."

"Prudence! Helena, is that virtue of your acquaintance?"

"She has at present only left her card for me, I own; but on this occasion I mean to call on her for a long visit I assure

you; but there is St. Paul's, and in another half hour or so, I shall see this poor, dear girl, and my uncle Villeroy."

As Lord Erpingham always intended to drive to Sir George Villeroy's immediately on coming to town, he had appointed a person to meet him there, who wanted to speak to him on business; and from this person the family in Gloucester Place learned of the approaching arrival of their visitors.

Lady Villeroy imparted the news to Julia on her way to her toilet.

"Pray, mamma, what shall I put on?" asked the fluttered girl.

"Your chintz to be sure," was the answer; and with a heavy heart she obeyed.

CHAP. III.

Lady Villeroy began the task of dressing with much more alacrity, for variety was in her the only passion powerful enough to conquer avarice; and as she was with reason proud of her person, and remembered that Lord Erpingham had often pronounced her to be a very fine woman, she had taken care to bespeak a fashionable, and becoming morning and evening dress against the time of his visit; the latter, as it was near their usual time of dinner, she now put on, not only on that account, but because an evening dress gave her a better opportunity of displaying her charms, and would lead Lord Erpingham perhaps to exclaim when he saw her, "Really, Lady Villeroy, I do not see that you are a day older since I saw you last!" probably the morning dress would have been more likely to secure this flattering

exclamation; but Lady Villeroy thought otherwise; and while her dowdy-looking, and ill-dressed daughter-in-law awaited the arrival of her noble visitor, with mortified vanity, and consciously unbecoming attire, Lady Villeroy entered the drawing-room so tastefully arrayed, and full of such conscious elegance and beauty, that Sir George beheld his wife with pride and admiration, but almost turned away with mortification and dislike from the contrast exhibited by Julia and her dress. Kinder feelings however instantly returned, when he reflected, that if he felt mortified, Julia's mortification in being obliged to wear such unbecoming apparel must be far greater; and calling Julia to him by the name of dear child, he imprinted a kiss on her pale cheek, and in no conciliating tone, desired to know why Lady Villeroy had dressed the poor girl in such an odious and disgusting gown. Lady Villeroy said it was an expensive, handsome chintz gown, and that large patterns were the fashion.

"But why do you make her wear that

ugly tippet and handkerchief always, as if she had deformities and disease to hide?"

"Because it would be indecent for her to go uncovered at her time of life, Sir George."

"Humph!" replied he, shrugging his shoulders and casting a sarcastic and meaning look at the uncovered shoulders and displayed person of Lady Villeroy, "What, I suppose elderly ladies alone are privileged to be indecent now a days."

Lady Villeroy did not reply; she was speechless with alarm and surprize! What was the matter with Sir George? It was evident that Julia was gaining favour and she losing it! a hateful insinuating creature! once she had caught her, lately, adjusting his pillow, and mixing wine and water for him when she had gone out; and another day she had found her reading aloud to him! It was time, then, that this dear child, who had been the means of drawing from him the only sarcasm on herself which she had yet heard, should be removed awhile from his presence, and go she should on some pretence or another.

" Yes," said she to herself, " if Lord Erpingham asks her to return with him, go she shall, though I had rather she should go any where else ; but then, she can go thither for nothing, and the suddenness of her departure will be an excuse for her not having more and better clothes ; and as she has a monstrous appetite, her board will be no small saving.—How right were the conjectures of Lady Helena !"

Lady Villeroy was not mistaken—Julia was gaining, and she losing ground in his favour.

The tyrant sometimes carries his abuse of power so far, that the meanest slaves are at length rouzed into resistance, and it was the case in this instance.

In former days Sir George had valued himself on his hospitality, and still more upon his family—a family so ancient, and so noble, that he conceived himself the equal of any peer of the realm, whose descent was of less antiquity. Lady Villeroy had mortified his feelings on both these points, and had forbidden him the indulgence of

one of them; she had positively refused to let him entertain Lord Erpingham as his guest, and had also declared that their house and establishment were not fit to receive and entertain persons of such high rank! Mean and grovelling idea! an acknowledgment of inferiority which his proud heart disdained. Then, his daughter, his heiress, dressed like any thing but a young lady, he thought, in a gown that looked as if made out of a bed-curtain, while no pains or expense were spared by her mother-in-law to decorate her own person! Sir George was indignant, more and more, the more that he reflected on his lady's conduct;—while her love of saving had not wounded his pride and his vanity, he was contented not to interfere; but now that she had invaded both, in his own and his daughter's person, he felt a strong determination to throw off the yoke she had imposed on him, and to open his doors again with all his wonted hospitality; a good night, and the consciousness of perfect health at that moment contri-

buted not a little to make him thus determined and thus energetic; and while he spoke to Lady Villeroy in a cold, peevish tone, and with averted eyes, but caught Julia fondly to his bosom, and gazed on her with an expression of tender recollection, as if in her he fancied that he beheld her mother, his alarmed wife trembled for her threatened power, and could only keep up her spirits to go through the expected visit with proper energy, by looking at herself in the glass, and thinking, with delighted expectation, how much Lord Erpingham would admire her. There was a silent spectator of all that passed, who was by no means an unobservant, and an uninterested one, namely, Miss Brightwen—and she augured favourably from what she saw, for the future interests of her beloved pupil. But if they led to nothing further, tokens of affection from a father were precious to a child; and Sophia beheld with pleasure the pale cheek of Julia, gradually overspread with a becoming glow, the result of pleasing emotion at

receiving notice so unusual, and in the presence of her mother-in-law. Miss Brightwen had been desired to attend Julia into the drawing-room on this occasion, not only because Julia had earnestly solicited it, but because Lady Villeroy thought the dowdy-looking governess, as well as the awkward daughter-in-law would prove an excellent foil to her charms. But there her self-love deceived her; she had too little mind, and too little of that discriminating taste which mind, and mind alone, bestows, to appreciate the unobtrusive attractions of Sophia Brightwen. A handsome and young face seen from under a very old looking mob cap, as if its wearer had resigned all pretensions to youth and beauty—with the illusions of wealth and happiness; a slender, but finely rounded form, shrouded in a double muslin handkerchief and a white gown, the only white gown she was possessed of, and which she persevered in wearing on this occasion, spite of Lady Villeroy's hints, that she wondered any but rich people should ever

wear white dresses as they cost so much washing, constituted the appearance and the garb of Sophia Brightwen—the latter affording a strong evidence of her propriety of feelings, and simplicity of character; and even Lady Villeroy could not help owning, as she observed how well the long black eye-lashes and the full-black eye-brow of Sophia set off the dazzling whiteness of her skin, and the expression of her long Asiatic eye, that really, in some views of her face, the dowdy girl was handsome.

At length the well-known liveries were recognised, and an open barouche and four drove up to the door. Sir George, obeying the impulse of his heart, limped to the head of the stairs to meet his old friend, and welcome Lady Helena; while Julia, rendered more than commonly awkward and bashful by emotion, got as far as possible from the door, and hid herself behind Miss Brightwen, who anxiously expected the entrance of Lady Helena, being eager to judge by her countenance

and manner, whether her hopes, that she would be a friend to her beloved pupil, and produce a favourable change in her joyless existence, were likely to be realized. Lady Helena entered with a cold and proud air, and suffered with evident unwillingness the salute and insincere welcome of the lady of the house; with a cold and still haughty eye she glanced over the now alarmed Sophia, but when she caught a view of her whom she sought, her countenance lighted up with pleasure and affection, and clasping Julia in her arms, she called her her dear Julia, her dear cousin, and expressed her delight at seeing her. Miss Brightwen was satisfied; a smile played on her expressive lip, and a tear darted to her dark eye; and when Lady Helena looked at her again it was with a very different air and manner, for she understood and admired the countenance that beamed so benignly upon her, and saying, "Your governess, I conclude, Julia?" she curtsied to her, with answering complacency. Lady Helena was, indeed, agree-

ably surprised; she had entered the house disliking, equally, Lady Villeroy and the governess, because she concluded a governess chosen by the former, and known to be deficient in fashionable accomplishments, must be odious and disagreeable; but now her quickness of perception told her she had been unjust, and that smile and that tear which came from Sophia Brightwen's heart made their instant way to her's. In the mean time Lord Erpingham was paying his compliments to Lady Villeroy, but not without casting an enquiring look towards Sophia, who was evidently not to be introduced to him. Who then could she be?—her dress was so quaint, that she might have been taken for a servant, but her manner could not be so mistaken; it had the mark of gentlewoman too strongly impressed on it, and he bowed to her as he went to meet Julia with the graceful courtesy of a man of the old school.

"Miss Brightwen, Julia's governess, papa," cried Lady Helena, and the earl bowed still lower; while the happy Julia

and Sophia exchanged looks of satisfaction.

"And is this the little Julia?" cried Lord Erpingham, holding her from him with both his hands, and gazing eagerly in her blushing face; "grown quite a woman I protest, but look up my dear, let me see your eyes,—yes," added he, with a sigh, and turning to Sir George, "it is the same sweet countenance Villeroy—that countenance which once seen can never be forgotten."

Sir George understood him; "I am glad you think so," said he, in a faltering voice.

"We see no likeness whatsoever, my lord," cried Lady Villeroy, hastily; "whatever likeness there was is gone now."

"Surely not, madam, features may change, but countenances never."

"No, to be sure," cried Lady Helena, "and Julia is still very like dear, dear aunt Villeroy."

This was wormwood to the feelings of

Lady Villeroy, and it was with difficulty she could restrain them from venting themselves in words of angry contradiction; conceal them she could not; and Lady Helena turned away with a look of such mallicious triumph at sight of her mortification, that Miss Brightwen could scarcely keep the proper degree of seriousness.

"But, my dear girl, have you a cold, or a cough, that you wear this frightful tippet?" said Lady Helena.

"Oh, no, but—"

"But, what!—do, pray take it off then;" and she was going to untie it, but Julia resisted, exclaiming, "Oh, no, I must not indeed; mamma—"

"It is my pleasure that she wears that tippet, Lady Helena."

"Then I have done—I understand you, and say no more, madam; but I hope you will allow me to go and adjust my hair after my journey."

"Certainly, but our unoccupied chambers are all in disorder—beds taken down;

but if you will excuse going into my room. Go, Miss Brightwen, and see that it is ready."

Julia accompanied her, eager to vent her glad feelings to her sympathising friend, and ask her if she did not think Lady Helena an angel?

The moment Julia disappeared, Lady Helena caught hold of Lady Villeroy's hand, and said, "Let me take advantage of Julia's absence, dear madam, to entreat that you will forgive her?"

"Forgive her!—what can your ladyship mean; do you not know—"

"Surely Julia is in disgrace, and you have thought proper to punish her by making her wear before us that odious tippet and gown; if it be not so, I beg pardon."

Lady Villeroy at first was too angry to reply; but Sir George exclaimed—"What is that you say, Lady Helena, about the gown and tippet?—I thought them monstrous queer and unbecoming myself, but my lady there said I was quite wrong, and they were all the fashion."

"I said no such thing, Sir George; but the gown was as good as new, and was worn by Miss Villeroy's betters: I think it was quite good enough for her, and I have no idea of encouraging a girl in ideas of waste and extravagance."

"It might be worn by Miss Villeroy's ancestors, madam," replied Lady Helena, proudly, "but not, I conceive, by her betters, as the daughter and heiress of Sir George and of Lady Julia Villeroy has not many betters in a worldly point of view." Then seeing the cloud grow still darker on the mother-in-law's brow, she added, in a gayer tone, "the gown may be handsome and good, and if worn by a fine graceful woman like you, Lady Villeroy, whose figure can carry any thing off, might appear to advantage; but my poor little unmade outré cousin looks in it as if she had been forced to fly from a fire in the night, and had wrapped herself up in one of the bed curtains."

"There," exclaimed Sir George, "I said your gown looked like a bed."

"Helena, you are very saucy, and I do not think even Lady Villeroy's good nature can forgive you," said Lord Erpingham.

"Oh, yes—yes she will;" said Lady Helena, remembering she had a point to carry, and repenting that she could not but appear an impertinent interferer; "yes, for her own sake, she will smile on me again, because she knows she has pretty dimples, and all women you always say, papa, like to display their beauties."

This second compliment to her beauty made Lady Helena's peace, and when Julia returned to conduct her to the chamber, the frowns were succeeded by the dimples.

"Now, my dear, take me to your own chamber, not Lady Villeroy's; I would rather see your apartments than her's,' said Lady Helena.

"My—my apartments!—oh! they are not worth seeing, and are at the top of the house."

"No matter, I love exploring;" and Julia obeyed. They found Miss Brightwen there, not a little astonished at sight of the young and noble visitor. "How is this, Miss Villeroy; our room is not worthy to admit such company!" she exclaimed.

"It is not worthy of such occupants," replied Lady Helena.

"But which is your own chamber, Julia?"

"Oh! we have but one chamber, and this is our sitting-room."

"What! have you not a bed to yourself?—But no, I dare say not, one pair of sheets cost less than two, and economy is a virtue."

At this strange speech, from such a person, Julia, not seeing its drift, looked suprised; but Miss Brightwen, thrown off her guard, by the archness of the look which accompanied it, and by the ludicrous and exact knowledge of Lady Villeroy's chamber, which it contained, gave way to laughter, which she vainly turned away to

hide. Lady Helena instantly seized her hand, exclaiming—"Miss Brightwen, I came hither prepared to hate you, but I see that I shall doat upon you, for I find that you can laugh and cry too, and I am sure you love that little girl, and——but hush! even truth must not be spoken at all times."

"Certainly not," replied Miss Brightwen, significantly, "but I am very glad that your ladyship parts with hatred so easily."

"Not all hatreds, Miss Brightwen."

"Dear me, how could you or any one think of hating poor, dear Miss Brightwen?" cried Julia, fondly throwing her arms round her.

"Nobody that knows her would, I am sure."

"And why do you call me little Lady Helena, I am as tall as you?"

"Taller, my dear, but I call every thing little that I love."

"And do you love me?—how kind; grateful little soul; but tell me why have

you not this large room to sit in ?" throwing open a door as she spoke.

" Oh, that is the nursery."

" Nursery ! what for your boys and girls, Julia, when you marry ?"

" No; for my brothers and sisters."

" And pray where are they, my dear ?"

" No where at present; but we live in expectations of them," said Miss Brightwen, smiling.

" What—really—is there one in the way ?"

" No, certainly not; but who knows what may happen, and it is right to be prepared with a room for the reception of expected guests.

" Admirable!" cried Lady Helena, turning round on her toe, and making numberless pirouettes round the room as she always did when any thing amused or delighted her; " and so in the mean time you, my dear Julia, are to be suffocated in a little nut-shell of a room; surely you might occupy this till the brats come."

"Oh! we do walk in it sometimes, and look out of the window."

"Really; what noble daring!"

"Yes, but mamma—"

"Julia, if ever you call that woman mamma in my presence, I—Julia! I cannot bear it; I knew and loved your own real mamma, and you surely must have strangely forgotten her to be always calling Lady Villeroy by that sacred name."

"Forgotten my own dear mother! no, indeed, Lady Helena, but papa desired me to call her so, and you know I ought to obey him."

"Yes, but do not do it in my presence if you can avoid it. What an odious glass, it is not big enough for a doll to dress by," said Lady Helena, pettishly, as she turned one of her fine dark curls round her fingers—what a set out for an heiress!—oh, how I hate——" Here Lady Helena's eye met the frowning brow of Miss Brightwen, whose awe of rank was very inferior to her sense of right, and who would not

allow any one to speak disrespectfully of Lady Villeroy in her presence, or that of her daughter-in-law. Lady Helena understood and obeyed the reproof, and respected the reprover, but she indulged herself in sundry grimaces, expressive of her wonder—an indignation at the appearance of the apartments—and then taking Miss Brightwen's arm she insisted on her returning to the drawing-room to give her one of her reproving looks whenever she was inclined to behave ill; and she made her re-appearance still leaning on her arm. Lady Villeroy beheld, with frowning surprise, Lady Helena's familiarity with a person whom she herself always kept at, what she called, a proper distance; and the sight did not help to soothe the irritation of her temper, which had been considerably ruffled by the praises Lord Erpingham had bestowed not only on the beauty of Julia's countenance, but on the fine face and distinguished appearance of her governess—two beings whose personal characters she had always looked upon

with contempt, and as unlikely to attract the observation, much less the admiration of such a connoissieur in beauty as Lord Erpingham; and I believe there is no severer pang can be inflicted on a woman of great personal pretensions, and still greater vanity, especially if in the wane of her beauty, than to hear encomiums on the personal charms of those whom she has always considered as inferior to herself—no matter how near the person so applauded, whether it be a sister, a niece, or even a daughter; indeed the more frequent and immediate the competition, the greater is the jealousy, and often the dislike; nor could she entirely restrain and conceal her feelings, for, with a tone of pique, she said, "I see that your ladyship soon makes acquaintance—I believe you never saw Julia's governess before."

"No, madam," she replied, "never; but as there is often love at first sight, why not friendship at first sight?—I think this lady capable of inspiring it."

"Dear! how romantic Lady Helena!

I think you do Miss Brightwen a great deal of honor."

Lady Helena was going to answer her, and, perhaps, in no conciliating manner, had she not been interrupted by Julia's approaching her with an eager and blushing countenance, as if she had something very interesting and important to say to her, but her courage failed her; she then put her arm through Lady Helena's, who allowed her to lead her to a seat; Julia wanted to say, "Then do you believe in love at first sight?"—but her conscious heart restrained the tell-tale question, and when she heard her mother-in-law's "how romantic," she was very glad that she had not spoken.

Sir George now asked if Lady Villeroy had not ordered refreshments.

"To be sure I have," she replied, in no gentle tone; and the butler at that moment made his appearance with chocolate and its appurtenances.

"None for me," said Lady Helena; but she eagerly seized on some of the

slender pieces of toasted bread, and ate them with strong marks of hunger. Lord Erpingham also refused the chocolate, but took the cake which accompanied it. To Miss Brightwen and Julia nothing was handed; but the servant having offered it to his mistress, set the tray on the table.

"You have no chocolate, madam," said Lord Erpingham, kindly, who had seen with generous indignation the neglect of the servant, which he attributed to the mistress; "will you allow me to offer you some?" taking a cup as he spoke.

"Miss Brightwen is bilious, my lord, she must not drink chocolate," said Lady Villeroy hastily; and Sophia, thanking him more by a look than by words, declined the offered cup.

Sir George who had seen, with mortification and surprise, chocolate enter when he expected a substantial luncheon for persons who had travelled thirty miles, now rose, and hobbled towards Lady Villeroy; "Why did you not order—" was all that Lady Helena overheard him say, but she saw

that Lady Villeroy resisted his proposal, whatever it was.

The keenly-feeling girl could no longer restrain her indignant impertinence; but, giving her father a look which made him almost tremble for the consequences, Lady Helena said to the butler, as he was leaving the room, "I will trouble you to bring me some Madeira and water."

The poor man, with a look of alarm, bowed, and looked at his no less alarmed mistress.

"There is Madeira in the cellaret," she replied.

"Yes, my lady, but—"

"I know what I say," she angrily answered, and the man disappeared.

"Have you nothing better to give Lady Helena than dry bread," cried Sir George, "to eat with her wine, Lady Villeroy?"

"My dear girl, I hope you will call for what you like, and consider yourself as quite at home."

"Helena has proved that she thinks

herself quite at home by asking for Madeira, Sir George. Had I supposed that so young a lady drank wine in the morning, I would have ordered it, Sir George."

"Well, but neither Lord Erpingham nor I are young ladies, and—"

"You drink Madeira in the morning! Sir George; you know it would kill you."

Here the entrance of the wine interrupted her. Lady Helena poured out half a glass, but, on tasting it, she set it down again coldly, observing, "That she could not drink Cape Madeira," and she saw the butler could scarcely restrain a smile.

Lady Villeroy's countenance now became crimson with rage, while Lord Erpingham looked reproachfully at his daughter.

But Sir George, in a voice tremulous with anger, exclaimed, "What, madam, do you give our noble friends Cape Madeira! let there be a bottle instantly brought of

that which has doubled the Cape, or I will go for it myself."

Lady Villeroy, forcing a smile, with livid lips, replied, " Oh, I did not know that it was part of the education of a modern young lady to be learned in wine." She then hastily left the room, followed by the butler.

Sir George, however, called him back, and desired to know whether there were no sandwiches to be had; the man said he would ask his lady, and hastened after her, while Sir George, muttering an oath, threw himself back in his chair in evident discomposure; and Lady Helena, who enjoyed the storm she had raised, pirouetted about the room; but she now remembered she had a boon to obtain, and, approaching Sir George in her most caressing manner, she begged to speak with him in the next room; then playfully hanging on his arm, as she led him thither, she whispered in his ear her wish to take Julia, her dear Julia, her own dear, blessed, beautiful aunt Julia's child home with them!

"That you shall if you wish it," he replied, brushing a tear from his eye, "though I own I shall miss the poor child very much now; lately I have seen her more than usual, and she has been very useful to me; but she shall go, for I know she will be happier away."

"Now, there is a dear good uncle Villeroy," cried Lady Helena, patting his cheek; "so all is settled."

"No, my dear, no—you must ask Lady Villeroy's consent also."

"Certainly, if you desire it."

"Oh, you have obliged me beyond measure."

"Yes; but if Lady Villeroy cannot spare her."

"Oh, you will find her very willing to spare her, believe me," she replied with a meaning nod of her head; and Lady Helena returned, gambolling before him like a kitten.

Lady Villeroy now re-entered, preceded by the Madeira and a tray of sandwiches, on which Lady Helena seized with

well acted voracity. "Now, I will tell you, Lady Villeroy," said she laughing, "that I would not let papa order any luncheon on the road, though we did not order dinner at Mivart's hotel till seven, because I expected we should get here just at your hot luncheon time."

"Hot luncheon! dear me, we never have such unwholesome things, and we dine at five."

"We did not know that; so, when we came, and instead of being summoned to a hearty meal, I beheld milk chocolate! all my milk of human kindness turned to gall, Lady Villeroy; and I called aloud for Madeira and water, as papa would not,—but then papa is of the old school, I of the new; and when one is where one knows one is welcome, I think it is more polite to give trouble than forbear."

A stiff inclination of her head was all Lady Villeroy's reply to this speech, for her attention was now painfully attracted

to Sir George, who, having tasted the wine to be sure it was right, had filled a bumper and drank it off. Lady Helena, who, in reality, did not want wine, drank a small quantity only, watching Lady Villeroy's countenance all the time, who was observing her father's movements, for he was pouring out a glass which he offered to Miss Brightwen, who accepted it.

"Dear me, Miss Brightwen, what are you about? drink strong wine fasting; for shame!" cried Lady Villeroy.

"I am not fasting, madam: I have eaten a sandwich, and I am ordered to drink a little Madeira every day, and I do drink it."

"Ordered, by whom?"

"By my physician, madam."

"Indeed! an expensive remedy; pray where do you get it, and how can you afford it?"

"I buy it for myself; and I must contrive to afford it as my health requires it, madam."

"Buy it for yourself! in my house, Miss Brightwen," cried Sir George; "Lady Villeroy, why is this?"

"There was no agreement for any wine when Miss Brightwen came hither, Sir George, and no governess can expect Madeira."

"But I expect, in future, Miss Brightwen should have Madeira for her own use, madam."

"Brightwen! Brightwen did you say?" said Lord Erpingham, "the name is familiar to me; I once knew a Mr. Brightwen in Norfolk, is he—"

"He is my father, sir," replied Sophia with great emotion.

"Your father! madam, and yet I see you here."

"Yes, sir, misfortune, and—"

"Forgive me, dear Miss Brightwen; but think of my surprise! when I saw him he lived on his own estate in Norfolk, and I was much indebted to him for his hospitality, and for some days pleasant shooting. Do tell me if—" and he took

her hand, as he spoke, so kindly, and his voice betrayed such interest, that poor Sophia's full heart could not bear it, and, bursting into tears, she rose to leave the room; as she did so, she heard a muttered "what fine feelings!" from Lady Villeroy, but she was made ample amends by Lady Helena's running to open the door for her, and grasping her hand affectionately as she passed her; poor Julia meanwhile sat even more on the edge of her chair than usual, and was unconsciously pulling the oft-mended ends of her gloves to pieces, from violent emotion.

"Julia, my dear," said Sir George, "I feel ashamed to think I know so little of Miss Brightwen's history, you, no doubt, can tell us the whole of it."

"Oh yes, papa; poor Mr. Brightwen was very generous, and so was his first wife, so they lived very hospitably."

"That is, they were extravagant, and made away with their fortune," said Lady Villeroy pettishly.

"Yes, mamma, I fear it was; and then poor Mrs. Brightwen pined and died; and then, and then—" here Julia paused and blushed.

"Well, what then, my dear?" said Sir George.

"Why, then Mr. Brightwen married a rich old woman for money."

"Poor man!" cried Lady Helena.

"Well, but then he became rich again; therefore, why was Miss Brightwen allowed to go out as governess?"

"Oh, because he went into business, and was almost ruined again; his new wife's temper was so bad, and she was so miserly, the children could not live at home, and were forced to go out."

"Poor things! no uncommon case I believe," said Lady Helena.

"I fear not," observed Lord Erpingham, who had been amused, yet pained by Julia's hesitation, and by the similarity of Miss Brightwen's situation to her own — but afraid lest Lady Villeroy should apply to herself his saucy daughter's words and

exclamations, he added, bowing to Lady Villeroy, "all mother's-in-law do not resemble some of my acquaintance."

The lady smiled at this implied compliment, as she considered it, and was about to speak when Julia hurried across the room.

"Whither are you going, child?" said she.

"I wish to go and see how Miss Brightwen is, mamma."

"That is kind, my dear girl," said Sir George. "Do go; Miss Brightwen deserves that attention from you; and here, carry her another glass of Madeira—stay, take the whole bottle, if our visitors drink no more."

"They cannot now, Sir George; they cannot, as Miss Brightwen is to have it."

"They know I could order more for Miss Brightwen, I trust, Lady Villeroy; and I am sure they do me the justice of believing, they are welcome to all the wine in my cellar."

"Certainly we do; but it is not for the

wine in your cellar that we are come," replied Lord Erpingham, eager to change the discourse, " but to rob you of something far more precious;—we come, with Lady Villeroy's permission, to take Miss Villeroy back with us; can we prevail on you madam to part with her?"

A sudden gleam of pleasure was now so visible in Lady Villeroy's face, that Lady Helena saw the point was gained, and bounding towards her with every fine feature full of joyful expression, she exclaimed,

" I thank you—that countenance, kinder than your tongue, to my impatience, tells me you consent!"

If Lady Helena had said, ' your countenance, instead of that,' Lady Villeroy would not have smiled so benignantly as she did, while pronouncing, " Certainly I consent to part with Julia if her father be equally willing;" for that seemed to stand for expressive, fine, speaking, in short, for all the epithets which she had ever heard applied to a countenance, and which Lady Helena's own eyes, beam-

ing with complacency, seemed to see, while she looked impatiently in her face. The only objection, she added, was the state of Julia's wardrobe—and there being no time to replenish it, as her departure was to take place so soon. To this Lady Helena's reply was ready and was satisfactory also; a reply uttered with an arch smile at the corners of her mouth, and a meaning glance at Lord Erpingham, who now began to speak of the necessary arrangements for the morrow, and said that there was room for Miss Villeroy's maid on the barouche seat by Lady Helena's.

"Julia has no maid," replied Lady Villeroy, bluntly; "she has been brought up to wait on herself my lord! whatever assistance she wanted, she has always received from Miss Brightwen."

"Then it will be the more necessary that young lady should accompany her, and I was just going to request the company of Miss Brightwen, to whom I should be most happy to have an opportunity of repaying the attentions I received from her ather."

"Oh, my dear, sweet papa!" exclaimed Lady Helena, how you have delighted me! I was wishing to request this additional favor.

"Aye," cried Sir "George, the poor thing is not well, and change of air may do her good as well as Julia: Pray, Lady Villeroy, spare Miss Brightwen."

The brow of Lady Villeroy now looked dark with storms. This attention shown by Lord Erpingham to a being whom she had always treated with neglect; the admiration which he evidently felt for a woman whom she had considered as incapable of inspiring it, were wormwood to her self-love; besides, she wanted Miss Brightwen's assistance in finishing a carpet, and in mending clothes and other notable jobs; and she uttered a most decided *no,* in no very complacent tone of voice.

Lady Helena was about to argue the point with her, when a look from her father checked her, and at this moment Julia and Miss Brightwen re-entered the room. Lady Helena instantly made known the

permission granted to the surprised and delighted Julia; but when she added that, to the great disappointment of Lord Erpingham and herself, Miss Brightwen could not be permitted to accompany her, Julia's countenance changed, and a tear started to her eye, while she turned round and looked sorrowfully at her gentle and resigned friend; the look was contagious. Miss Brightwen again suddenly quitted the room.

"Sure," cried Lady Villeroy, sarcastically, "that girl's sensibility is quite nauseous!"

"Stay where you are Julia," she added, seeing her hand was on the door, "you seem to forget that our noble guests have the first claims on your notice and attention."

"That I beg leave to deny," cried Lady Helena, "such a friend as Miss Brightwen has the first claim on my cousin Julia's attention, especially when she is sick and sorrowful."

"Cousin Julia!" cried Lady Villeroy

with a sneer, " really, Lady Helena, one would suppose you were a quaker, for quakers always call cousin, even where there is no relationship at all."

" Do they ! I am so glad ! for they are dear, good people I am told, and Mrs. Fry is a quaker you know."

" Mrs. Fry ! that shocking woman who is so fond of bad company and bad people ; she goes to Newgate every day and wants to prevent their being hanged ! well, I am sure I should be very sorry to be like her in any thing."

" It is not easy to resemble her, Lady Villeroy—but, as you say she is a shocking woman to be so fond of associating with bad people, and merely in order to try to make them good, and then to suppose, poor mistaken woman ! that they have souls to be saved like herself, and souls worth saving !"

" Aye, souls worth saving ! that is a mistake indeed," said Lady Villeroy, not comprehending the irony, though a little apprehensive that Lady Helena was laugh-

ing at her; but a frown from Lord Erpingham again checked Lady Helena, and the conversation was entirely put an end to by Sir George's pausing in his walk from one drawing-room to the other, and again requesting that Miss Brightwen might accompany Julia. But the *no* was even more violently pronounced than before, and Lady Helena seeing that Julia's heart was full, kindly said, she wished to speak with her, and led her out of the room. They then hastened to Julia's apartment, and while Julia wept on Miss Brightwen's shoulder, Lady Helena indulged herself with many half uttered, half murmured exclamations against cunning, tyrannical, half bred women, and marâtres; which Miss Brightwen was now too sorrowful and dispirited to notice or reprove; still she was glad, very glad that Julia was going to be where she could not fail to be happy; but to have accompanied her, would have made her as happy herself as she now could be; and to see happiness within her reach, yet not be

able to grasp it! but Sophia was soon ashamed of giving way to the weakness of unavailing regret, and her dark expressive eye, freed from its tears, was soon able to reprove the daring sallies of Lady Helena against the sacred majesty of Julia's mother-in-law. To be brief, the noble travellers soon after departed to their hotel, leaving Lady Villeroy delighted to get rid of them, as she feared every moment Sir George's rash and desperate hospitality should urge him to insist on their staying to partake of the fare, which, with no savoury smell, was on the point of being served up. But Sir George felt no sympathy with her delight—with him mortified feelings alone reigned triumphant. He had not been allowed the enjoyment of his noble friend's company at dinner, nor to entertain him in the stile to which he had been accustomed—a stile worthy of Lord Erpingham's rank and his own. Then, his daughter, his heiress was not to have a maid of her own to wait on her, and she was denied the company

and assistance of her dear, kind, young friend and intelligent adviser. It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that Sir George scarcely ate at dinner, and that he doubled his quantity of wine after it, now that he exhibited a degree of rebellion to Lady Villeroy's authority, which, till then, she had believed to be impossible, and which alarmed her for the continuance of her conjugal dominion.

No sooner had Julia made her appearance with the dessert, than Sir George desired her to go back for Miss Brightwen; Julia eagerly obeyed the command, but Lady Villeroy, with a faltering voice, begged to know what he wanted with Miss Brightwen.

"I want her, madam," he replied, "to drink a glass of Madeira with me; I bitterly repent I never paid that deserving and unfortunate young lady proper respect before."

"Why, Sir George, you are doting surely—respect to your daughter's governess!"

"And why not?—if I do not pay her respect myself, how can I expect my daughter should respect her? besides, Lady Villeroy, as Lord Erpingham says, she is a very handsome woman, and beauty in distress is a very engaging thing, Lady Villeroy."

"Lord Erpingham is a fool," cried Lady Villeroy, enraged beyond all restraint, "and the proverb says 'one fool makes many,' Sir George."

Miss Brightwen's entrance prevented Sir George's reply, who, in order to make more than sufficient amends for his past neglect, advanced to meet the astonished Sophia, and taking her by the hand, led her to a seat beside him; then asking her what she would eat, put some dried-up raisins and an old sugar-cake on her plate; but on tasting the same himself he muttered a sort of an oath, and hastily ringing the bell, desired the butler to take away the trash he had brought, and get a proper dessert for a gentleman's table at the nearest shop.

The man secretly delighted at what he heard, with an ill-suppressed grin prepared to obey, but Lady Villeroy commanded him to desist, and in a voice choked with passion, desired to know why the dessert was not as good to day as yesterday—and why, what was good enough for her and him was not good enough for Miss Brightwen?

"Because, madam, the dessert has been good enough in your eyes for a succession of yesterdays and to-days—— it is a faded beauty now, Lady Villeroy, and I like something new and pretty, as well as good, like Miss Brightwen herself, so come, you, sir—come you grinning jackanapes!—clear the table, and cover it again as it ought to be covered."

The man obeyed with alacrity, and uninterrupted, for his lady was too full of consternation and of misery, I may say, to make any further resistance; for there cannot be a more agonizing pang in the catalogue of woman's trials, than to see and hear a man, whom she has considered

as wholly devoted to herself, express admiration of youthful beauty; wherefore, she is conscious of the decline of her own charms, and, therefore, seems threatened with the loss of her sovereignty. Even Lady Villeroy's avarice was subdued by this apprehension; and when the butler returned with ices, as well as cakes and fruit, she was not provoked to utter a single angry animadversion, but she sat in silent anxiety, regarding, with a watchful and jealous eye, Sir George's conduct towards Sophia and Julia; the latter he had seated on his lap, and was kindly pressing her to his heart, ever and anon, while he occasionally took Miss Brightwen's hand, and urged her to eat, in a voice which was full of tenderness and kindness. What! two rivals, at once, started up to overset her empire! it was too much, and she began to repent of not having consented to let Miss Brightwen accompany her pupil to Lord Erpingham's.

Sir George meanwhile continued to press his young companions to eat and

drink, and offering an ice to his lady, sarcastically observed, "You had better take it Lady Villeroy, for ice, you know, cannot be served up a second time." Had she been only angry, the chances are that Lady Villeroy would have forcibly resisted accepting the offered favor at the risk of injuring her carpet; but her anger was mixed with so much agony that she only refused what was offered to her with a faintly uttered negative, and continued to beat, what is vulgarly called, the devil's tattoo with her feet.

"My dear Miss Brightwen," said Sir George, "I know not how I shall bear to part with this dear girl, now I have learned to feel her real value," and as he spoke he took Julia on his knee again; "this living image of—" here he paused, as if in strong emotion, and filled another bumper; "but I hope you will be so kind as to look in upon me, now and then, in her absence. I was sorry that you could not be spared, but now, I am selfish enough to rejoice that you remain with us, and

when Lady Villeroy goes out, I trust, you will come and enliven my solitude."

"Certainly, sir, if you wish it."

"Oh, dear, yes!"

"Pray do, Miss Brightwen; and, papa, make her read to you—she reads so beautifully!"

"Indeed! an excellent accomplishment in a woman;—really, Miss Brightwen, I am quite sorry I have hitherto seen so little of you, and paid you so little attention; but in future I will make the most of the domestic comfort, which is, I find, within my reach: my dear girl, here is your father's health—poor man! he is, I think you said, Julia, very much to be pitied. In what way, my dear, is he so afflicted?"

Both Miss Brightwen and Julia were too painfully conscious to be able to answer this question, and their embarrassment was so visible to Lady Villeroy, and the cause so painfully obvious also, that she could not keep her seat, but darting

an angry glance at her, she suddenly left the room, firmly resolving that if Sir George, who was now, she flattered herself, under the influence of wine, should be as fond of Sophia's company the next day as he was then, she should, at all events, be gotten rid of for some time.

Sir George, who from a feeling of vindictive mortification, had struggled with sleep, in order to pique his offending wife, had no longer a sufficient motive to continue his efforts, but gently releasing Julia from his arms, he prepared himself for his usual repose, and Sophia and her pupil returned to their apartment.

"Oh, how kind my dear papa is grown!" cried Julia, as they went along; "I shall now be so sorry to leave him; I do hope you will be very, very kind to him in my absence; but then, I shall be sorry to leave you too. Dear me!—well, to be sure, there is no unmixed good in this world—is there Miss Brightwen?"

"No, Julia, certainly not; if there

were, how few of us would think of another and a better world!"

The rest of the evening was passed by them in praises of Lady Helena and Lord Erpingham, and in preparations for the morrow; by Sir George, in alternate sleep and uncomfortable musings; and by Lady Villeroy, in an indefatigable application to her needle, while her heart was swelling with secret rage, and fears of evil to come, certain, but as yet undefined to her imagination.

CHAP. IV.

The morning came, and, terrible confirmation of her worst forebodings, Sir George, though no longer under the influence of wine, insisted on the company of Miss Brightwen at the breakfast table. Had Lady Helena been his instigator, in order to gain Miss Brightwen as her guest, he could not have pursued a more certain way of obtaining the end in view. Long before Sophia had eaten the egg, which he forced her to take, Lady Villeroy had said within herself, "she shall accompany Julia!" but she did not make known her determination, as she feared Sir George might now oppose it, from aversion, to part with his new flame, as jealousy styled Sophia. Nor did she mention it till there was only just time for her to get ready against the appointed hour; but scarcely could she do so, for Julia was in such an ecstacy of

delight at the idea of not being separated from her, that she was incapable of rendering her any assistance, till Sophia, in order to soberise her joy, reminded her how much her poor father would miss her society; then the ready tear succeeded the as ready smile, and she was enabled to be useful.

At length the expected barouche was seen driving up to the door, and Julia and Sophia entered the drawing-room equipped for the journey. Julia's dress consisted of a straw bonnet, rather pinched up in front, by the frequent struggle which, during many a winter, it had gone through with the uncourteous wind, and of a dark cloth pelisse, the arms of which were too short for the wearer, while the cuffs were turned up with a skin that once had been covered with hair of some animal, but now only patches remained unimpaired, to shew the enquiring naturalist to what species it belonged.

Sir George's now observant eye instantly discovered the shabbiness of her

appearance, and he turned his blushing daughter round, examining her dress with indignant surprise; as he did so, his eye glanced on Miss Brightwen, and he desired to know whither she was going in her neat and pretty attire; and when he heard she too was going to leave him, he expressed his regret so loudly, that Lady Villeroy was impatient till she was fairly seated in the carriage, and removed from his sight.

To his reproaches concerning the shabbiness of Julia's dress, she had, she thought, a sufficient satisfactory answer: "You know there was not time to get new things ready!"

"But, madam, was such a dress as that ever fit to be worn by my daughter and heiress?"

The word 'heiress,' uttered, for the first time, by the lips of Sir George, had a most overpowering effect on the nerves of his wife, as he had hitherto been as anxious as herself for the birth of a son and heir, and disposed to continue to hope,

though hope were lost. It was with a faltering and subdued voice, therefore, that she answered—

"Your heiress, Sir George? I never till now understood that Miss Villeroy was to be brought up and dressed as your heiress!"

At this moment the servant announced Lord Erpingham and Lady Helena Fortescue; the latter fixed her quick eye on the poor mortified Julia's travelling dress, but delicately withdrew it instantly, and, with an exclamation of joy, desired to know whether Miss Brightwen was so equipped to accompany them. The affirmative, in answer to this question, was received with satisfaction so warmly expressed, that Lady Villeroy's brow grew still darker than before, and her noble guests, therefore, seeing that all was not right, wished to make their visit as short as possible; and Julia having received a cold salute from Lady Villeroy, went with a tearful eye to take leave of her father, who caught her fondly in his arms, and,

in a faltering voice, declared that he did not know when he experienced such pain, as parting with her occasioned him, especially as Miss Brightwen would not stay to console him; "But listen to me, Lady Helena," said he, "do Julia and me the honor and favor to interest yourself in my dear girl's appearance, and order for her a wardrobe worthy the daughter of—, you understand me."

"I do, and will obey *à la lettre*."

"Thank you, my dear; then now take this, Julia!" he cried, giving her a bank note to a large amount.

"Oh no, papa, I do not want money, mamma has given me some already."

"Indeed!" he replied, looking pleased, "and, how much?"

"Two pounds!"

Lady Helena now turned to the window unable to restrain her laughter, at sight of the ludicrous and indignant wonder of Sir George's face, when he heard of this liberal allowance to his heiress for a visit of several weeks; however, he was too well

bred to express his displeasure before company; but, forcing the note into the hands of Julia, he said, "There—there, I hate long partings, especially with those I love, and now, the sooner the pang is over the better." He then wrung his old friend's hand in silence, and, with overflowing eyes, tried to tell him the next time they met, it should, he insisted on it, be for a longer time, and he should not go to an hotel: he then saluted Miss Brightwen, to the great sorrow of Lady Villeroy, and seemed as if he knew not how to relinquish the weeping Julia from his arms; at length they were seated, and the barouche drove off, leaving Sir George to reproach his astonished and indignant wife for her parsimony to his daughter; and her to wish that a severe fit of the gout, by rendering him again dependent on her, might conquer his rebellious spirit, and restore her influence in all its pristine power.

"Stop! stop! whither are you going?" cried Lord Erpingham to the post-boys, "this is not the way home."

"No, they have my orders," cried Lady Helena, bidding the men go on.

"Your orders, indeed! what do you mean?"

"Oh, you shall soon know, papa," and the carriage stopped in a few minutes at a very fashionable milliner's.

"I will be with you again directly," said Lady Helena, jumping out, but not before she had taken a large handsome shawl from her own shoulders and thrown it over Julia, so as to hide her pelisse entirely.

"What is the girl about now?" cried Lord Erpingham, smiling complacently, as he saw the joy which lighted up the eyes of Julia while she folded the graceful drapery round her; and Miss Brightwen looked as pleased as her pupil. Lady Helena soon returned with a bonnet of great beauty and elegance, and a shawl for herself like the one which she had thrown over Julia; then telling the young woman, who stood curtsying at the door, that she should hear from her soon; she

untied Julia's old bonnet, tied on the new one in its place, and threw the other with an air of indescribable contempt under the seat, and cried out with an air of authority, "You may drive towards home now. There, papa!" she added, "now I flatter myself, our cousin looks like our cousin; and, oh, when I get her to Laurel Grove, I will make her so smart, you will not know her again, papa!"

"But, my dear, you have not done much as yet—this fine mantle is only an external covering; I thought you would have called Julia out with you, to have her measure taken; is not that the term ladies?"

"What!" exclaimed Lady Helena, "I exhibit my blushing pretty pet in that dress, to the grinning wonder of millinery apprentices; no, indeed! my plans are laid, and I do so enjoy them! but how unnecessary was it for my uncle Villeroy, to desire me to interest myself in the appearance of Julia; never did child long to dress a doll more than I do to dress you!

and that is very generous in me, when I know how much handsomer you will then be than I am." Here Lady Helena's eyes met those of Miss Brightwen: "Papa!" cried she, blushing, "have you ever examined Miss Brightwen's eyes?"

"As much as I dare."

"That's right, papa, be as timid still, for I never was so afraid of an eye in my life, and I shall soon not dare to look at her at all."

"Why so, my dear girl? in me such fear may be prudent."

"Oh, and in me too; for if you had only seen her reproving look at me just now."

"For what, Helena?"

"Oh, she accuses me of affectation and falsehood, that is, her look did—it said you are fibbing, Lady Helena—you think yourself quite as handsome as my pupil."

"Is this true, Miss Brightwen?"

"Yes, my lord, I own it is; but I did not think my looks had been so expressive."

"Now you are affected and false, Miss Brightwen, and I can bear to look at you again; if you did not think your eye powerful, why inflict it on me? that is, why look at me at that moment as you did?"

"I had thought your ladyship superior to the sort of disingenuousness you were practising, and I felt mortified and disappointed."

"There, Helena! a compliment and a lesson at once."

"But, indeed, papa, I value the latter the most, and hope to profit by it."

It was now Miss Brightwen's turn to make disqualifying speeches, and talk of inability, presumption, and so forth; but her good sense, and her integrity forbade it: she felt that Lady Helena had defects, to which a look or word of gentle reproof might occasionally be salutary; and she felt also a high-minded desire to repay her's and her father's kindness to herself, in the only way in her power. Short indeed seemed the drive to Laurel Grove to all the travellers—but more especially

to Sophia, who saw herself suddenly raised to her original consequence after years of contemptuous neglect, and appreciated at her full value by those whose esteem was in reality distinction.

"What a paradise it is!" cried Miss Brightwen, as from the brow of one of the steepest Surrey Hills, the seat of Lord Erpingham, in the valley beneath, burst suddenly on her eyes—eyes accustomed to gaze only on the level plains of Norfolk, while Julia was trying to recollect every scene which she had known in childhood, and making herself believe that all was as it used to be, though she did not think the trees had been so thick and tall.

"If the trees could speak, they would say the same of you Julia—for it is really surprising to think how girls and shrubs too will grow in twelve years."

"True, Lady Helena, it was silly in me to say what I did! well, but I shall not find your mamma grown and altered—my dear, dear aunt."

"Aunt, Julia! welcome sound! what

a convincing proof that we are thirty miles from your mam—— Lady Villeroy."

"Yes, my dear, your aunt is grown fat, but Time, the more he sees of her loves her so well that he cannot bear to hurt her; therefore, she is not grown old, and you know she is past the age for growing tall—but see, there she is at the window."

Julia instantly jumped up, and wholly forgetting her former care to conceal her shabby pelisse in the delight of seeing the well remembered face, kissed both her hands with such vehemance that her mantle fell and disclosed her in all her *mesquinerie* (shabbiness) of appearance.

"There, there, cover up those naked wrists again, pray do," cried Lady Helena, with a look of dismay; "never did daughter of the house of Villeroy wear such a garb as that before, and never shall again if I can help it; but here we are!" Then jumping out, and almost dragging Julia after her, Lady Helena left the Earl to do proper honor to Miss Brightwen, and bounding into the room where the countess and

another lady sat, gave the delighted Julia into her mother's arms. The first look which Lady Erpingham gave, was one of pleasure, for she beheld the beaming countenance and regular features of her regretted mother; but the second was one of pain and mortification, as her person seemed ill-made, and as if inclined to deformity. Lady Helena meanwhile had bounded back again to meet Miss Brightwen, whom in the warm feelings of the moment, she had unceremoniously preceded; but she was too late, the earl was leading her in, and he presented her as Miss Brightwen, a young lady from whose father he had received civilities which he should be happy to return.

"But, mamma, you will never guess who Miss Brightwen is. She is no other than the odious, stupid governess of my dear cousin Julia, whom I was so fond of abusing when unknown, and now she is—" here she paused and passed her arm fondly round the waist of the blushing Sophia.

"What is she, Helena?"

"A dear, sweet creature; only she has formidable eyes, and knows how to use them."

"Helena, you distress Miss Brightwen," cried the countess, regarding her with added courtesy when she heard who she was, and would have entered into conversation with her, but Lady Helena seizing Julia, turned her slowly round and round before her mother and Mrs. Magnal, the lady present.

"Well, what does the girl mean now?" said Lord Erpingham."

"Why this I mean—get Julia by heart, figure, and dress; see what she is now, that you may judge of my powers of metamorphosis, that is all, and I am only imitating the celebrated Mr. Repton, papa, who used, you know, to make an exact resemblance of the place which he was called to improve and adorn, and then give another drawing to shew what it was under his hands. So here you see is Julia Villeroy, a high-shouldered, narrow-

chested, crop-haired, ill-dressed young person."

"Helena! Helena!"

"Nay, indeed, mamma, even your candour can see nothing to admire in this shabby pelisse of which the flames shall consume all the moths have left,—so now, to begin my operations, come away Julia! but I will have all the merit to myself, not even Miss Brightwen shall be present."

"Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest girl, till you applaud the deed! so sit down with mamma, and dear Mrs. Magnal, eat, drink, and be merry, send us up a sandwich, and good bye till we shine upon you in all our glory!"

Julia was as willing to go as Lady Helena, and immediately and gladly followed, or rather preceded her at her bidding—but Lady Erpingham called her daughter back, and in a whisper told her to be careful what she said of Julia's form, as she was very sure the defects were those of nature as well as dress, and not removable.

"We shall see that," she replied, and darted out of the room.

Lady Helena's maid was instantly summoned to a conference; accordingly the wardrobe of her young lady was made to yield up all its stores, as Julia was declared able to wear her dresses, being of the same size with herself, and in a few moments the willing Julia was dispossessed of her disgusting habilaments; but, oh, the genereus joy of Lady Helena, when she found that Julia's form was fine as her face; and it was with great difficulty the poor timid girl, unused to undress before strangers, could prevail on her enthusiastic friend not to summon her mother to the chamber to see how pretty her doll was before it was dressed, and how well jointed.

"Why, my dear creature, how could you ever breathe in these stays of your's?" asked Lady Helena, finding that her own were only just large enough for her.

"I could not always," answered Julia,

with meek simplicity, while Lady Helena stalked about the chamber, with uplifted hand, as if threatening some one, and muttering maratre! odious maratre! at every step, being no longer under the government of Sophia's eye.

At length Lady Helena allowed Julia and herself to rest from their labours awhile, that she might deliberate on the measures necessary to give the last embellishments to her dear, darling doll.

The dress to be worn was soon decided on, much to the horror of the waiting maid, who most pathetically exclaimed—"What, my lady! that new dress from Madam D.'s which you have never worn—the white net over white satin!"

"Dear me," cried Julia, "that's too good for me."

"For shame, Julia—have more self-respect; nothing is too good for the heiress of Sir George and Lady Julia Villeroy—and you, Mrs. Gibbs, do as I bid you, and fetch my present—my first valuable pre-

sent to my dear cousin Julia; you can make me one like it, she shall have the original." I shall not attempt to describe Julia's refusal and exclamations, and, at last, delighted consent, to wear and accept the most beautiful dress she had ever seen, if aunt Erpingham approved; still she was sure she should be happier in a less costly dress, for if she should tear and dirty it—

"But what can we do with this ill-cut crop, Gibbs?"

"My dear girl, what is become of your fine glossy curls?"

"Oh, mam—"

"Julia!" cried Lady Helena, in a threatening tone, "well, then, Lady Villeroy chose they should be cut off."

"Did she!"—a humph—gulping down a hard word; "but your hair is inclined to curl, I think."

"O, yes!"

"Then, Gibbs, soap and water directly?"

In a short time the application was so successful, and the auburn hair of Julia,

curled in glossy beauty over her fine shaped head.

Lady Helena was in raptures; exclaiming, as the work of adorning proceeded, "Oh! poor dear Repton was nothing to me." Nor was Julia, herself, less delighted, as she glanced a timid eye over her dress, while she beheld herself at full length in a glass, and as the consciousness of self-approving beauty stole across her busy thoughts, she wished that the generous unknown, as she called her deliverer, could could see her in that dress.

Miss Brightwen was, at length, permitted to enter, and give her opinion of the metamorphosis, which called a blush of pleasure into her pale cheek—that blush was a triumph to Lady Helena; but Miss Brightwen, herself, as company was expected, and at Lord Erpingham's house she was to appear, and be treated as somebody, was not allowed to escape the improving hand of Lady Helena. Her cap was forbidden to be worn; her fine hair was becomingly dressed, and a lace scarf,

which Lady Helena insisted she should wear, gave a sufficiently dressy appearance to her simple dove-coloured silk gown.

"Now, then," said Lady Helena, "that I have done my duty to my guests, I must do it to myself; come, Gibbs."

"What gown, my lady?—the one your ladyship meant to wear; you know you—"

"What! murmuring again Gibbs! well, as I see you are mortified—"

"Yes, my lady, that gown was so becoming, that- "

"Say no more; to pacify you I will wear the lovely pink gros de Naples, and even as many flowers as you desire; I will be a walking green-house; Persian jessamine shall rise beyond camelia japonicas, and orange flowers beyond geraniums—will that do, Gibbs?"

"No, my lady, I hope I have not such a vulgar taste."

"What! displeased again, really——" Here Lady Helena suddenly paused, for she heard Julia, who had been looking out of

the window into the garden during this dialogue, suddenly exclaim—"Oh, Miss Brightwen!" and leaning her head on Sophia's shoulder.

"What is the matter—are you ill Julia?" cried Lady Helena, running to her.

"Oh, no, nothing, only I saw—"

"What?—a—"

"A gentleman!"

"And what then; is it so alarming a sight as to put you in a flurry?—a perfect gentleman is a rare sight, I own; but, my dear, if one has such an effect, what will two or three have—and I expect as many at dinner to-day, so what will you have to fortify you, camphor, jalap, or sal volatile? How, tears! my poor child! this is really serious; Miss Brightwen, what does this mean?—leave the room for a moment, Gibbs."

But Lady Helena and Sophia both interrogated in vain; Julia only said she was sorry and ashamed of being so foolish, but could not, or would not say more; and again she started on seeing a gentleman

in a dark-blue coat and shining buttons cross the lawn, and left the window in disorder.

" Well, is that the terrible gentleman, Julia? I hope not, if terror betokens love; for that is our head gardener, a great beau, and one of the handsomest young men I ever saw; you can never have seen him before, Julia, I am sure; look again!"

She and Miss Brightwen both looked, and Julia said nothing; but Sophia said, " That is the same gentleman who passed before, and I am almost certain he is quite a stranger to both of us."

Julia was silent, and Lady Helena said, " As this is the case, and you are dumb, Julia, I may as well recal Gibbs."

" I should like to go to my own room," replied Julia; and Miss Brightwen conducted her thither: when there, Julia threw her arms round her governess and exclaimed in great agitation, " Oh, no! no! it was no gardener whom I saw! but the generous unknown who saved my life!"

"You must be mistaken: I looked on the lawn at the same moment you did, and saw no one but the man whom Lady Helena calls the gardener."

Julia said no more, but emotion and expectation soon restored the bloom of which the former had robbed her, and even with greater brilliancy; and when Lady Helena came to conduct her down stairs, she gazed on her with generous exultation; when they reached the drawing-room, Lord Erpingham met the embarrassed Julia at the door, and presented her to the company, while the ever kind Lady Helena gave her arm to Miss Brightwen, in order to mark the respect she felt for her, and courteously introduced her to the circle around.

"There, you see!" said Lady Helena to the Countess and Mrs. Magnal, looking at Julia.

"Well done, Repton," cried Mrs. Magnal, while Lady Erpingham followed Julia with eyes of tender regret, as she recalled her mother to her mind, and lived those

hours over again in fancy, when she and Lady Julia used to enter the room together, as full of unblighted hopes and prospects of future happiness; and how proud she would be of her daughter's appearance; and how happy! as happy as I am when I look at Helena. At this moment Lady Helena's eye met her's, and the tear, hitherto restrained, now fell on her cheek. "Nay, nay," she cried, running to her, and interpreting her look, "not tears for the dead, but smiles for the living, dear mamma; but now, does not my doll look pretty?"

"If she had your carriage, Helena, she would be all her mother!"

"I can't either give her or lend her that, mamma, but she will be able to steal it in time, I trust, having such opportunities given her by you and me."

CHAP. V.

The dinner was now announced, and Lord Erpingham gave his arm to the wife of a peer's son; then pitying Julia's timidity, he offered her the other, and desired her to sit next him on his left hand at the table: she gladly obeyed, not having yet recovered her agitation on entering the room, when, casting a timid look round, she had tried to discover the incognita, but he was certainly not there, and she felt at once mortified and relieved. But she had scarcely begun her dinner when her power of eating was taken away, by the exclamation of—"But where is Marcus? where is my son?" from Lady Erpingham.

"Not ready, his servant says," replied the earl.

Here Sophia looked at Julia, and saw

by her countenance that her hopes and her emotion were again awakened.

"Well," said Lady Helena, "if I had not been ready for dinner, what would Marcus have said?"

"That you were guilty of an impropriety, Helena, and deserved to be scolded."

"Aye, and he would have scolded me too."

"But not unkindly, Helena."

"No, to be sure, mamma, Marcus can do nothing wrong—but even you cannot approve this unusual want of regularity."

"Remember, it is unusual, and therefore excusable."

"May be so; but I am very angry for all that; there was I meditating to present him in my most graceful manner to Miss Villeroy, leading him up to her with—Let me have the honour to present my brother, Captain Fortescue, to his cousin Julia?"

Captain Fortescue! thought Julia; and my deliverer was a naval officer, and a

lord's son! oh, it must be he!" and she could scarcely keep her seat from expectation of his entrance.

"Is that all you meant to say, sweet Helena! I could have done it better myself," cried a singular looking young man, who sat by Helena, dressed in the most studied manner.

"No, it was not all—but now the presentation must take place over a plate of hot soup, and across a plateau, and our grace and dignity will have no opportunity of shewing themselves."

"Well, I suppose Marcus and the second course will come in together."

"This is really abominable, mamma, though it is unusual, especially as Marcus had nothing to do to prevent his making his toilet earlier."

"Take care, my Helena, of Tray," said the young man who spoke before, "or you will repent your severity on poor Marcus."

"Impossible!"

"Yes you will, when you hear what

detained the culprit from his toilet; I know he will be angry with me for telling, but Marcus has been acting his own puppy dog; he has been in the water."

"What do you mean, Mansfeld?"

"Only that he has been saving a child from drowning, and not very far from being drowned himself."

The mother and sister both rose, Julia half rose; but, at a look from Sophia, re-seated herself.

Mansfeld said, "Lady Helena, this is only one of your bad jokes."

"No, on my honor; ask papa."

"My dear girl, it is all true, but I wished you and Augusta not to know it till you saw Marcus well and safe; he has been in danger, for the river was rapid, deep, and full of weeds."

"Augusta, my love! be composed—he is here!"

Captain Fortescue now entered the room, and his mother and sister ran to him with hearts too full, for aught but the silent welcome of stretched out arms and

tearful eyes; and when he turned his face towards Julia, she recognised in the saviour of the drowning child her own preserver; it was more than romantic seventeen could bear! and Sophia, who also recognised him immediately, and watched her every look, now saw her colour change, and led her out of the room just as the earl exclaimed—

"Miss Villeroy, you are ill; the heat of the room, I fear, oppresses you—Helena, attend to Miss Villeroy."

Lady Helena would have followed her, but Sophia begged she would not, and the former was as yet too much engrossed with her brother to feel interest enough in Julia's indisposition, to be sorry for the prohibition. I shall not enter into any detail of what Miss Brightwen said to her agitated pupil, suffice that she told her Captain Fortescue would despise a weak, love-sick girl, as such ill-restrained emotion would soon discover her to be; and seeing that consideration seemed to have but little effect, she added, that it would be

an ill return for all her years of love to her, if she should now have to blush for her pupil, and have it said of her, that she had so fatally neglected her duty, as not to have taught her even decent self-command.

" That shall never be; you shall never have to blush for me, Miss Brightwen," cried Julia, making a great effort to be calm, and I am ready to accompany you back to the dinner room!"

" When they returned, they found Captain Fortescue made, against his will, the hero of his own tale; but he politely broke off his relation on the entrance of the strangers, to whom Lady Helena presented him immediately, and whom he seemed to look at as if he had never seen them before, which, as Julia afterwards remarked to Miss Brightwen, was very strange: " It was not likely," said she, " that he should know me again in my beautiful dress, but that he should forget you is surprising."

Captain Fortescue's account of his morning's exploit, though told with modesty and simplicity, could not fail to do credit to his humanity, and to deepen the impression which that humanity, when exercised towards herself, had made in the young heart of Julia; but Sophia listened with anxiety to a tale which would not otherwise have interested her, only because she feared for its effect on the peace of her pupil, especially as the reciter was a man in the prime of life, of a noble, prepossessing countenance, and a fine manly figure; not that these requisites were necessary to charm her devoted pupil. The man who had saved her life was the man who had captivated her fancy, and had he been little indebted to nature for the gift of personal beauty, her imagination would have bestowed it on him; nor were Sophia's fears lessened when she saw Julia unconscious that there was any one present beside himself—hanging with fixed attention on every word he uttered, while

he, she also observed, scarcely regarded her in return, or seemed to think that more was required of him towards the new guests than a "will you do me the honor to drink wine with me," addressed to each in her turn; but if her brother was unconscious of the deep interest which Julia not only felt in him, but betrayed, Lady Helena was not so unobservant, and as soon as the ladies retired, she took Sophia and Julia into her own room, and desired to know of the latter whether she was really given to love at first sight, and whether her heroic brother had displaced the handsome gardener in her heart.

"Oh! but—" replied Julia, blushing and stammering to the extremest degree of embarrassment—"oh, but he—he saved my life!"

"Pshaw, pshaw my dear, the boy's life you mean."

"No, no; my life, my own life."

"Who! my brother, Captain Fortescue?"

"Yes, indeed it is very true," said Sophia.

"Oh, you sly ones!" replied the delighted Lady Helena, catching Julia in her arms; "and then, to meet as if you had never met before! And so Julia is a rogue, and Marcus a rogue; and I am so happy!"

"What for?"

"Oh, that is my secret:—but come tell me all about it, for I am dying with curiosity."

Miss Brightwen, then, at Julia's request, related the danger and the escape; the latter of which was wholly owing, she believed, to the generous fearlessness of Captain Fortescue; which generous fearlessness he would have shewn, and exercised, said Lady Helena, to save the life of any one—therefore, ladies, you do not owe him any marvellous obligation, for it is evident he did not know whether you were pretty or not.

"No obligation!" cried Julia, indignantly.

"No marvellous one were my words—but come tell me a little more."

Sophia now informed her of Julia's disregarding her intreaties to ensure her own safety, while her deliverer was in danger: and no sooner did Lady Helena hear this, than she clapped her hands and pirouetted round the room in her usual manner, when she was excessively pleased, and exclaiming, "Well done! my generous, grateful girl; why Julia your are quite as heroic as Marcus in your way, and I promise you he shall know of this."

"Oh, no! do not tell him, pray do not."

"Be quiet, my dear, you are a little fool, and I must insist on being allowed to ask Marcus what I please, and tell him what I please; Marcus, the woman-hater, I call him."

"What!" cried Julia, turning pale: on which Lady Helena gave Julia a full account of her brother's unfortunate and ill-placed attachment.

Marcus Fortescue, when very young, had been thrown in the way of a very handsome and still more seducing woman,

rather older than himself, who had spent her fortune, and whose extravagant propensities made a rich marriage almost indispensible to her:—but the rank of Captain Fortescue had even more attraction for her ambition than wealth had for her necessities; she, therefore, forgot her debts and her embarrassments, when he had drawn from his parents a reluctant consent to the union, and an early day was fixed for its taking place;—but the lover was ordered unexpectedly to join his ship, and the lady, during his absence, was seen and admired by an elderly gentleman of very large fortune. At this moment her creditors, believing her marriage with Mr. Fortescue was at an end, became unexpectedly clamorous; and as her heart was not concerned in her engagements to him, she eagerly caught at the first overture which her new admirer made her, and before her lover returned she was become the bride of Mr. Tyrawley! But so artfully did she word her letter to the half-distracted Marcus; so pathetically did she paint her

agony on finding the extent of her debts—debts, she said, incurred for a brother who had died a beggar, and her consequent resolve, never to burthen him with her embarrassments, a proceeding which love and honor equally forbade That Fortescue was not only her victim but her dupe, and while, as a man of principle and feeling, he resolved never, if possible, to see her again, he fancied her as wretched as himself; and though he condemned the step which she had taken, he was convinced that she was deserving of pity, rather than of censure; still there were moments when he thought that if she had really loved him, she would have gone to prison, rather than have married another man; and, in these periods of misery, he forswore the sex, and appeared as his sister had described him—a woman-hater! but, then, at other times his heart melted into tenderness at the idea of his self-devoted Lucy, and he resolved never to marry, not from hatred of the sex, but from fidelity to her.

Mrs. Tyrawley, meanwhile, was enjoying all the happiness which wealth and luxury could bestow, but all she had of heart was suffering severely—for that all was given to one on whom, in early youth, she had lavished whatever she could command of money, and for whom she had also injured her reputation; one, too, who repaid her often with coldness and neglect, and, who, not unfrequently made her experience the miseries of jealousy. During her engagement to Fortescue, and at the time of her marriage, this man was living abroad with another woman, and vindictive resentment had added weight to the motives which prompted the two marriages. Now he was returned, but not to her, for he pretended to resent her infidelity, though he had publicly avowed his own, and that bosom which abroad was sparkling with diamonds, that made her the envy of her sex, was torn at home with the misery of faithful but unrequited passion; and the injuries of Captain Fortescue were amply revenged.

It was the still remaining influence of this dangerous woman that Lady Helena wished to counteract, by the presence and power of Julia; but it was only too evident that her brother had not only beheld Miss Villeroy without even a consciousness that she was beautiful, and a wish to look again at her, but that, though he had seen her under interesting and remarkable circumstances, she had not made the slightest impression on his memory. But when Lady Helena heard of the moral beauty which Julia had displayed, her hopes revived, for she knew, that though her brother might be blind to charms of person, since the falsehood of his beautiful mistress, he would not be equally insensible to the charms of such a grateful and unconscious self-devotion as Julia had exhibited. "He has evidently forgotten your face, Julia," said she; "but when he hears what I shall tell him, Marcus will not forget your heart; and he has learned to know that a man can depend on a woman's heart with more security than on

her beauty:—so, courage! courage! and if you cannot help liking Marcus, and I fear that you have allowed yourself to think of him too much and too long, I trust that, though as yet you have no cause for hope, you have also none to despair; so look as pretty as you can, and leave the rest to me."

"Oh, dear Lady Helena! how ashamed I am that you should know of my weakness."

"Never mind, if I did not know your malady, child, how could I try to apply a remedy to it?—but let us now return to the drawing-room. It may, however, be as well for you, Julia, to follow Miss Brightwen's excellent rule with you, and never talk on this subject when it can be avoided; I cannot bear to encourage in you an attachment which may be hopeless, even though the object of it be my own dear brother."

"God bless you!" cried Sophia, with great feeling, and pleased at this impulsive tribute.

Lady Helena pressed closely to her side the arm she held, whispering, as they entered the garden, where all the company had assembled, "Now, then, I am sure I have spoken right; is——" Lady Helena was become very anxious to learn her brother's opinion of Julia, and taking his arm she led him aside to ask him if he was not struck with her beauty?

"I have scarcely looked at her," he coldly replied, "but she seems very unformed—no manner."

"She is not mature enough for you, I suppose," returned Lady Helena, rather sarcastically.

"No, she is not," he abruptly answered, and left her as abruptly.

So I have gained nothing by this! thought Lady Helena, regretting that she had wounded her brother's feelings by her evident allusion to Mrs. Tyrawley; but it was not long before she again gained possession of his arm, and led him to a half-circular building, where she had left Julia and Miss Brightwen; but she vainly tried

to force him into conversation with her new friends; his manner was cold, absent, and distant. At length Lady Helena exclaimed—"Marcus, I should like to know how many civic wreaths you have deserved; how many lives do you think you have saved?"

"Only one that I know of."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I think so."

"Did you never save two beautiful damsels from a mad dog, at a considerable risk to yourself?"

"I remember seizing a mad dog by the neck once, just as he was about to spring, as I thought, on a young girl; but she was not beautiful that I know of, but rather dowdy-looking, and the poor thing was so terrified that she lost all presence of mind, and would not follow the example of her companion, and get over the gate, though I could not tell how long I should be able to hold the dog."

"So, then, you imputed her remaining only to terror—did you?"

" To be sure—to what else could I attribute it ?"

" Certainly not to its true cause, for that was really so romantically generous and heroic, that I laugh when I think of it."

" Lady Helena !" said Julia, turning now pale, and now red by turns.

" What is all this ?" said Captain Fortescue, looking earnestly at the blushing girl, " and how came you acquainted with this adventure ? and how does it concern Miss Villeroy ? she could not be the dowdy-looking girl whom I saved ?"

" But indeed she was."

" Lady Helena, pray, pray do not—"

" Be quiet, I will tell him, and the reason why she would not get over the gate was, that she feared her deliverer was in danger, and she awaited the event in agonizing suspense, regardless of self-preservation."

" Is it possible !" he exclaimed, " looking at Julia with eyes whose expression, had she seen it, would have amply repaid

her for her painful confusion; but poor Julia could see nothing, and, leaning her head on Miss Brightwen's shoulder, she burst into tears. In a moment the tone of Fortescue's feelings towards her was altered. Why did she cry? it was so girlish! such sickening sensibility? and he remembered, also, that she had been forced to leave the room at dinner! yet, to be sure, if it was true, that in consideration of his danger she neglected to provide for her own safety, she was a grateful-hearted being, and he respected her for it;—while these thoughts were passing in his mind, Lady Helena was privately scolding, and Miss Brightwen soothing Julia; the latter then turned to him and said—

"I, as well as my pupil, Captain Fortescue, have always hoped that chance would, one day, enable us to return our gallant deliverer thanks for our preservation; or rather, could enable me to thank him for saving my dear young friend: as you may recollect, that, less disinterested than she was, I took your advice and

climbed over the gate, vainly trying to pull her after me."

"Yes, yes I do remember, and I commended your wisdom; but I think I now see your fair companion as she then stood, her hands clasped, and every feature convulsed with agony!"

As he spoke, he gazed earnestly at the now-recovered Julia, who ventured to raise her eyes to his—eyes which thanked him, and regarded him with grateful emotion in spite of herself.

"Miss Villeroy," said he, taking her hand respectfully, "I little thought what treasures I was preserving, when I involuntarily seized that dangerous animal!—but how could you be so rash as to remain where you did?"

"I could not help it," replied Julia; "I could not move, for the creature struggled so violently, I expected every moment it would bite you."

"And what then, my dear," said Lady Helena, "what would that have signified to you, provided you were unbitten."

"Lady Helena, for shame! how can you talk so unfeelingly; if any harm had happened to my preserver, I am sure I——" Here she turned away to hide the tears that filled her eyes.

"Should never have been happy again, I suppose."

"You see, Marcus, the dowdy-looking girl has a heart."

"Hush, hush Helena! do not repeat such a calumny against the youth and beauty which I now behold; what could ail my eyes when they could see two such objects as those now before me, without committing the image of both of them to memory immediately."

"I will tell you, Marcus, you did not look at Miss Brightwen, and Julia was then a dowdy-looking girl, as you describe her; but thanks to Repton and me—she now is what you see her, and hearts, untouched as yet, may rue the saving of that day. But come, let us in, Julia, the dews are beginning to fall, and from that

danger not even my gallant brother can save you."

Captain Fortescue now offered an arm to each of his new friends; and his sister, during their walk to the house, made numberless bounds, and as many pirouettes.

"But, Julia," cried she, suddenly stopping, "you have not yet expressed your thanks to Marcus."

"She has looked them," he replied, "and that look was all-sufficient; besides, I really feel that I only did what any man would have done on such an occasion."

"Indeed!" observed Miss Brightwen, "you are not just to yourself, for the other men present ran away even faster than I did; Miss Villeroy was the only hero besides yourself."

"Valiant little soul!" cried Lady Helena, patting her on the shoulder.

"Well, well! but I am a sailor, and a man of war you know, and must be brave whether I will or no; and—"

Here a loud shriek from Lady Helena interrupted them, she had nearly trodden

on a frog, and, calling it odious reptile, she shrunk from it with fearful abhorrence.

"Poor thing!" exclaimed Julia, taking it up gently, and laying it into the nearest flower-bed as she spoke, it might be trodden upon if it remained here."

"There Helena! there is a lesson and an example for you," said Captain Fortescue. "Miss Villeroy, most men would have done what you have thanked me for doing, but few women would have had the courage to act as you have done."

"Oh, yes Marcus, yes! any girl that had had the advantage of being Miss Brightwen's pupil—for, see, I am sure by the pride with which she is now looking at Julia, that she taught her to conquer natural antipathies and touch frogs, and be sentimentally anxious to save the lives of the horrid creatures."

"Is it not so, Miss Brightwen, for I remember the time when Julia used to scream even if a fly set up its bristle at her."

"Oh, yes! and I used to run away from a harmless beetle as if it had been a lion—but Miss Brightwen convinced me of my folly."

"Folly! thank you my dear for that back-handed blow."

"Dear me, Lady Helena, I am sure I did not mean—"

"No matter what you meant; you, by implication, said I was a fool—but I forgive you, because I am generous enough to like to see you shine at my expense, and I own you have done so, and that I am a fool to scream at sight of a frog."

"Well, Helena, and what is the next step after seeing one's folly."

"To amend it, brother; and if you will solemnly promise to follow my example, and give up all your follies, I will begin the work of reformation directly,—but, dear Miss Brightwen, I am a spoiled child; my grandmother loved me too well, and therefore never taught me to subdue my own will; she meant well, and I loved her very, very dearly."

"Then prove your affection by not blaming the unintended result of her's, Helena," replied her brother, while Julia exclaimed—

"Oh, dear! it is so very sweet to be loved by a parent, that I wonder—do not you Miss Brightwen—that any one can think their parents can love them too well?" As she spoke her voice became tremulous, and Fortescue again looked kindly on her.

"I really believe, thought he, *that* little girl has a heart, and that she does not say and do prepossessing things from artifice, and the wish to please."

Lady Helena meanwhile, though a little hurt at her brother's reproof, and the tone in which he had uttered it, was comforted by the look he gave her artless friend, and observed, with a smile, "that she wished her heart were as loving and grateful as Julia's."

The greater part of that evening was passed in a manner only too gratifying to the feelings of Julia—for its chief amuse-

ment was looking over the drawings of Captain Fortescue, and hearing him sing duets, or glees, with some amateur performers who had joined the party; but it was with a beating heart, and glowing cheek, that she over-heard Lady Helena tell her brother that Miss Villeroy had a fine voice, as she had been told, and an excellent ear;—also, an admirable eye for drawing, and that she hoped, under his tuition, she would learn both to draw and to sing tolerably, till she was allowed proper instruction. Impossible! I can never sing before him! never shew him my drawings! was the immediate conviction of her mind—yet she was not sorry to hear such praises of her powers, though she was sure Captain Fortescue would be terribly disappointed were she ever to exhibit before him. Still, how she envied the young lady who was so happy as to sing duets with him, was it possible that such happiness could ever be her's! never, never!

The next morning saw Julia risen

almost with the lark to try and copy a drawing of Captain Fortescue's, which Lady Helena had lent her unknown to her brother; and Miss Brightwen was astonished to see how well she succeeded in her task. "And this talent has been suffered to remain uncultivated!" said Sophia to herself;—"but will not Julia lose in peace of mind what she may gain in accomplishments, if she became the pupil of the man she already likes too well!" Yet how could she help it? impossible, without betraying the secret of her pupil, for she saw that Lady Helena meant that her brother should undertake to impart some of his own accomplishments to Julia, and she knew that Lady Helena was too much used to have her own wishes fulfilled, to submit to her representation, and be governed by her opinion. She could not, however, be easy without making known her fears to Lady Helena on the subject;—but that sanguine being declared that there was room only for the hope, as men were all fond of teaching—teaching being a

mark of superiority—and that a dull eye would have more chance of charming a man's heart, when looking up imploringly in his, full of conscious dependence, than the brightest of eyes beaming with independence and power.

"This is system, dear Lady Helena," replied Sophia.

"It is truth also, dear Miss Brightwen, and you must not forbid the poor Julia from trying her only chance to get a heart back, in dear exchange for her own:—for her own is, I see, gone beyond reach."

"Do not say so! I cannot bear to think that the feelings of my pupil are under such bad regulation:—no, I still flatter myself that they can be made obedient to her reason and her delicacy."

"Well, well! perhaps so,—but if Marcus can be brought to love her in return, reason and delicacy may be at the wedding, and give the bride joy with safe consciences, you know."

"True; if—" but opposition was vain. The copy was seized by the scheming

and delighted sister, and carried in triumph to her brother, who owned Julia deserved a master, and agreed to teach her some of the rudiments of drawing;—but Julia made little progress when he was with her. Whether she copied what he drew, or tried, under his tuition, to draw from nature, for her lines were unassured, and her touch faint; but when alone her progress was surprizing; her best effort was, however, seen only by herself—namely, a pencil sketch of her teacher's profile, which might have satisfied the most accurate eye, and was only too valuable to one of the most affectionate of hearts. When Lady Helena, after much solicitation, prevailed on Julia to sing to her brother, Captain Fortescue gave no encouragement to her to proceed, as she really seemed to have neither voice nor ear; and Lady Helena herself believed that Sophia had over-rated her pupil's musical powers from ignorance and partiality: —but, one morning that Julia having seen the brother and sister set off on a long walk, repaired pri-

vately to the music room, to turn over the songs and glees which she had heard Captain Fortescue sing, and was, from ear, singing over all the words which accorded best with her feelings. Lady Helena and her brother returned unexpectedly, and as they drew near, they heard, with surprize and delight, an unknown but sweet and powerful voice breathing forth, amongst other things, the plaintive melody of that old glee—

Since first I saw thy face, I resolved
To honor and renown thee!
If now I be disdained, I wish
My heart had never known thee!

They stopped to listen—the singer repeated the strain again and again, as if feeling lingered over the sound as well as taste; while Lady Helena, with sparkling eyes, whispered Marcus, "It must be Julia! it can be no one else!"

"Nonsense, Helena, no fear could have obscured entirely such a voice and power as that."

Not fear alone, thought she, but timid love might.

"Well, well! listen still," she replied, and Julia sung the song, which in *their* presence she had vainly attempted. Lady Helena triumphed! it was a song which she had never heard or seen till Julia tried to sing it, and now even her brother believed that she was the invisible musician—but invisible she was not long allowed to remain; for, as soon as she had ended her song, Lady Helena threw open the door, and the note which Julia was just going to sound, died away on her lips.

"So, you sly thing, you can sing I find!" cried she, clasping Julia in her arms.

"Yes; there is no want of voice and ear now," said Captain Fortescue, while Julia exhibited such signs of confusion, and such trembling emotion—emotion so far beyond the apparent cause—that the pleasure this discovery of her talent gave him, was quite lost in aversion to what he thought her weak sensibility. Affected

emotion, indeed, he thought it, and he could only bring himself to join coldly in Lady Helena's extravagant encomiums; however he did praise her, and poor Julia did not feel the coldness of his manner, but told Sophia when alone with her, how good and condescending Captain Fortescue was to give her such warm encouragement, and say she had a fine voice. It was, however, some time before she could put forth all the powers of her voice in his presence, but as soon as he was out of the room he often heard her rich and powerful tones following him as he went, and floating on the air as he walked under the window.

This is very strange, thought he at length—I never saw such timidity as this before! The love of admiration, the desire to please have usually given full possession of their powers to all the women with whom I have hitherto associated, but this beautiful girl seems to be a stranger to the common excitements of her sex. It is very strange, but may not eager desire to please sometimes take away the

power, and may not a conscious feeling of--of—— Here Captain Fortescue suddenly paused in his meditation, for he was really no coxcomb, and he found he was on the very point of becoming so;—he certainly observed Julia with more attention from that moment, than he had ever done before, and saw that, though her eye never by any chance met his with a steady gaze, it was fixed on him whenever he seemed engaged in looking at any one else."

"What can this mean," said he to himself, "I am afraid—Pshaw!—yet, I may as well not go on to sing with her so much. The master we have procured for her does very well. I shall not take the pains I have done with her: but whether from curiosity, or pity, or generosity, Captain Fortescue continued his lessons, and Julia was at length able to enjoy that envied pleasure of which she had once despaired—that of singing duets with him! the present moment, however, still bounded the thoughts and wishes of the artless

girl. To be with her kind preserver, as she liked to call him—to receive his instructions in singing and drawing, with fixed attention—to beguile the time of his absence by practising according to those instructions, and looking forward with eager expectation to the hour of re-union with him, now formed the business and the happiness of her life, and as she experienced no jealous fear, because Captain Fortescue payed more attention to her than he did to any other woman, Julia was completely contented with her situation, and all she dreaded was change of any kind.

Lady Helena, meanwhile, was sanguine in her hope that her brother was every day becoming more and more entangled, though unconsciously so, in the light charms of Julia; and Miss Brightwen was inclined to think so too: both these interested observers were the more convinced that Julia was becoming every day more and more an object of interest to Captain Fortescue, from the anxiety with which he ften laboured to impress his sister, tha

he never, never could love again; and that all he could now feel, even for the finest and most accomplished woman in the world, was admiration and brotherly affection. On these occasions his sister was too wise to contradict him, though she was forced to turn away from him, to hide the arch smile which forced itself on her lip, when she saw her brother's eyes, while his lips uttered these assurances, involuntarily watching the door for the expected entrance of Julia.

Nor were Lord and Lady Erpingham uninterested spectators of what was passing; it was one of the first wishes of their hearts to see Captain Fortescue, whose fortune was large, united to Julia; and as the earl had imparted to Sir George his secret wishes on the subject, and had received his assurances of a glad consent to the union, they felt themselves at liberty to do all in their power to assist the progress of the attachment; and, in order to make their son still more dependent for amusement on Julia and the family circle, they

resolved to pass a few weeks at a retired and beautiful cottage which the earl had on the sea-shore, in the county of Sussex.

Julia had never seen the sea, and Captain Fortescue derived a new and unexpected pleasure from watching her expressive countenance, as the sound and the sight of its ever rolling waters first presented themselves to her wondering eye and ear. But not even nature, in this her perilous magnificence, could long abstract the attention of Julia from him who sat beside her; while she gazed, and turning on him a look of apprehensive affection, she involuntarily exclaimed—"And is this what you call your home, Captain Fortescue?—Oh, dear, I almost wish I had not seen it."

"Why so, Miss Villeroy?" replied Marcus, blushing, but gazing on her with more than usual animation and pleasure.

"Aye; why so Julia?" said Lady Helena, with one of her arch looks.

The poor girl now felt that she had said too much, and with excessive embar-

rassment, she replied, "Oh, because—because it is such an unsafe and such a restless home."

"It the better suits a restless heart," returned he, assuming his gravest and coldest manner; for there was an expression of triumph in the face of his sister, who had, he saw, observed his countenance while he looked at Julia; and he leaned over the side of the barouche, with so dejected an air that Julia uttered a deep and involuntary sigh.

"Look, Julia, there is a ship in full sail!" cried Lady Helena, wishing to draw Julia's tell-tale attention from her brother; "there, that is just such a house as Marcus lives in."

"Indeed!" she faintly replied, "and can he sleep in such a dwelling, and on such a restless place?"

"Oh, the more restless the better, as you heard him say just now; but here we are, Marcus, if you are not asleep, perhaps you will condescend to hand us out."

The pavilion, as it was called, was well deserving of the rapturous praises whi

burst from the lips of Miss Brightwen and Julia on entering it. The drawing-room terminated in a large bay-window, which commanded a fine view of the sea, and seemed to project immediately over it, so that, while that mass of waters rolled bluely round on every side, it required no great sketch of fancy for the residents in it to imagine that they were in the cabin of an East Indiaman, and on their voyage to India. Even Lady Helena, used as she was to the view, gazed on it with as much delight as Miss Brightwen and Julia; but they soon missed the latter from their side, for she had found dearer objects of contemplation—some sea-views, with M. Fortescue del. upon them.

"Really, Julia," cried Lady Helena, "I have no patience with your want of taste; to be looking at those paltry works of the creature, when the most stupendous work of the Creator is in all its magnificence before you."

"Oh, but they are your—your brother's drawings."

"I know that, and—" here Captain Fortescue's voice was heard at the door, and Julia's intuitive delicacy led her instantly from the drawings to the window.

"Is not this a delightful view, ladies?" cried Marcus, as he entered.

"O, yes!" said Julia.

"My brother said view, not views, Julia," said Lady Helena, smiling maliciously as she whispered her remark: "I think you are more qualified to give an opinion of the latter than of the former."

"What is that?" enquired Captain Fortescue.

"Nothing, sir," replied Miss Brightwen, alarmed for her pupil, and hastening to her rescue."

"Nothing, but that Lady Helena, who is, you know, rather tyrannical, insists on every one's being as enthusiastic as herself on every occasion; and she is reproaching Miss Villeroy, because she does not feel as rapturously as herself on the sight of the ocean."

"Wretched calumniator! treacherous

misrepresenter!" cried Lady Helena: "I tyrannical!—am I tyrannical, Marcus?"

Sophia was satisfied; she had taken Lady Helena off Julia, and as that was all she wanted, she cared not for her attacks on herself; but the arrival and entrance of Lord and Lady Erpingham suspended the conversation, and Lady Helena forgot to renew it.

The next day it was proposed that they should all go on the sea in a boat which was kept for such excursions; and the proposal was received with pleasure by every one but Lady Helena, who, beckoning Miss Brightwen into the garden, exclaimed, with a look of alarm, "Oh, that we had never come hither!"

"Why so?"

"Because, suppose Julia should be ill at sea?"

"What then, Lady Helena, she will get well again, like other people."

"Yes! but to be seen by my brother in such a situation; to run the risk of disgusting him before she has made sure of

charming him. Ah, you may laugh, Miss Brightwen, but I am a very bad sailor myself, and no power on earth shall ever tempt me to go in the same boat with—I know who!"

"Indeed!" cried Sophia, ceasing to laugh at Lady Helena's ludicrous distress, at the impulse of curiosity; "so there is an—I know who—I am so glad to hear it; who is this feared and favoured person?"

"You will laugh still more if I tell you; it is somebody whom I never saw."

"Amazing!"

"It is the dearest friend of Marcus, and a perfect paragon; now, though I hate paragons, and always fancy them fat, unmeaning-looking beings, with cherub faces, and wings behind their ears, I have an idea that I should admire this Lord Restormel. But then, even such as you see me, Marcus tells me that his friend is not at all likely to admire me, because—Oh, sweet Miss Brightwen, how I do love you for that flattering look of incredulity! but, indeed, Marcus means what he says;

Lord Restormel is very particular in his ideas respecting women, and I am too eccentric, too independent, too daring to please him."

"Then," replied Sophia, laughing, "I should think that your best chance of charming him would be in a boat; for what can make you appear more dependent than sea-sickness, more timid-looking, and more like other people."

"Disgusting dependence! terrible timidity! contemptible common-place!—No, no, when we do meet, I will have all my powers of resistance about me; but, in the meanwhile, do consider the interests of this dear Julia. She must take her chance—she must bear, if needs be, the common lot; and, see, there she is leaning on your brother's arm, and looking so delighted at the boat that is to carry Julia and her fortunes, that I hope the elevation of her feelings will elevate her beyond the reach of physical sufferings."

"But if she should sympathise with me?"

"Is that likely, when her sympathy with your brother must be so much stronger?—we shall see, but never, never shall any man I love, and whom I wish to love me, see me any where but on terra firma."

The boat now waited for Lady Helena and Sophia, the former of whom nearly lost her footing as she entered, it by having her whole attention fixed on Julia, in order to observe how she bore the sea-saw motion which the roughness of the waves had already occasioned; but Julia was all smiles and blushes of delight. The sea was Captain Fortescue's home, and she was there with him, the situation drew her nearer to him, she thought; and never, never had she felt so happy; certainly, she had never looked so beautiful: and while Lady Helena was pale and silent, from apprehension rather than from indisposition, Julia's countenance beamed with a sort of triumphant satisfaction; Captain Fortescue declared she was so good a sailor,

she should go with him on his next cruize if she would honor him so far.

Here Sophia gave Lady Helena a look, which said, see how unnecessary your fears were, and unnecessary they continued to be, for even Lady Helena herself returned to shore, without having experienced any sensation but that of pleasure; and Julia declared that she should like to live on the sea as well as on land.

"Indeed!" said Lord Erpingham, smiling, "then you were certainly made for a sailor's wife, Miss Villeroy."

At these words his son, ever suspicious of artifice in women, darted an enquiring look at Julia, expecting to read in her face that her admiration of the sea was a lure thrown out to entangle him; but Julia's hopes had never yet gone such lengths, and, with the utmost simplicity and unconcern, she replied—"If I had been a man, my lord, I should certainly have been a sailor, I believe; I hope we shall take another sail to-morrow!" Marcus was satisfied she was not laying a snare for him; nay,

he began to think her heart was not so much his as he had fancied it to be, and he felt mortified; for neither man nor woman likes to give up the belief that they possess the power which they had appropriated to themselves, even when that power was not dear to the heart, and was only gratifying to the vanity. This apprehension led Captain Fortescue involuntarily to watch Julia's looks and manners, with more interested observation than they had ever before excited in him, but the result was unfavourable to Julia's interest; the conscious conviction which his earnest gaze and fixed attention occasioned, her downcast eye, her embarrassed manner, and her blushing cheek, set the alarms of his vanity at rest; he ceased to be anxious concerning the prize which his conscience told him he had never sought to win, and for which, as he was sure of it unsought, he, in a measure, felt comparatively little value; still there was such evident purity, such ingenuousness, and such an absence of all artifice, in whatever

Julia said, looked, or did, that, but for the evident wishes of his family, which were too openly manifested, Captain Fortescue's moral taste would have led him to linger affectionately by the side of Julia, and feel no dearer pleasure than in assisting her to draw, and in joining his voice to her in the duets which he had taught her; but fear for her, and his conviction that he could never love again, held him at a distance from her, and even Lady Helena, as well as Julia, was too great a novice in love, to know that a woman has begun to influence a man's heart in a very sure and undoubted manner, when he feels himself obliged to act counter to his inclination, and wean himself at all from her society. Julia, therefore, wept on the shoulder of Sophia, because Captain Fortescue was not within as much as usual; and Lady Helena was quite in despair at finding that Marcus was oftener in his boat than at the piano-forte with Julia; but, Sophia, more skilled in developing the progress of the affections, saw cause for hope where the

others read only despair; this conviction, however, she thought it best to conceal in her own bosom, as Julia's love wanted not the fuel of hope to make it burn only too brightly, and Lady Helena might, she thought, in an unguarded moment, unveil her brother's heart to himself too soon, when convinced that aught was hidden there.

CHAP. VI.

Captain Fortescue's own ship, the Valiant, now came round to that station, and Julia's heart beat with joyful expectation when he declared his intention of giving a dance on board of it, if his sister would provide the necessary number of ladies. Never was desire obeyed with greater alacrity—though Lady Erpingham, on the plea of ill health, had declined visiting in the neighbourhood, Lady Helena had returned all the calls which had been made, and her invitations to the ball were thankfully accepted. On the appointed day, the cabin and deck of the Valiant were thronged with beauty and fashion; and Julia, who had been much improved in dancing quadrilles, by the brother and sister, looked forward to the dance with unmixed satisfaction.

Captain Fortescue began the ball with

Miss Villeroy as his mother's guest; but he was careful not to engage her again, lest the report that he was her lover should be confirmed by his doing so; but he almost repented of his caution, when he saw how closely the heart of Julia was besieged by his second lieutenant, Lord Clanross, who was in the prime of youth, and so excessively handsome, both in face and person, that while he sat beside Julia on the deck, as the sea breeze sported in their glossy curls, and deepened the colour in their cheeks, Raphael might have drawn them as Cupid by the side of Psyche: while Julia's eye was downcast, her cheek flushed, and her smile evidently that of pleasure, as Captain Fortescue, with no pleasing consciousness observed. " And was he then deceived? was Julia coquettish like the rest of her sex; and could this beautiful, noble boy, in one hour annihilate all his claims on her preference, and by administering incense to her vanity and her ambition, banish his image from her heart? could it be? no—he would inter-

rupt their long conversation, held too, as it seemed to him, at an indecorous distance from the rest of the company :" and he was going towards them in order to ascertain what effect his sudden appearance would have on Julia, when Lady Helena, who, with Miss Brightwen was watching with evident pleasure the uneasy countenance of her brother, as he beheld the happy pair, now intercepted him on his way, and seizing one of his arms, while she desired Miss Brightwen to take the other —" Whither were you going, Marcus ?" cried she.

" Going ! I—what does it signify whither I was going, as you have arrested my steps."

" Oh, yes, I want you to answer questions ; Miss Brightwen is rather uneasy at Lord Clanross's attentions to her pupil, and especially as she seems to receive them with so much complacency ; tell us what the beautiful boy's pretensions are ? would it do do you think ?"

"Do! really I—I never thought about it."

"That's a fib, Marcus; for I thought you looked at them as anxiously as Miss Brightwen did, and I feared—"

"Feared what, Helena?"

"That you knew something against the young peer, and were wishing to interrupt so dangerous an intercourse."

"Not dangerous, but a little too marked for a first interview—do not you think so."

"I do, sir," said Miss Brightwen, "and as you are of the same opinion, I shall go and interrupt it."

"No, no; pray do not interrupt so much evident happiness, but give the noble lover a fair chance."

"Lover, Helena! and a fair chance! why, I thought—"

"Yes; I know you think, but you may be mistaken, and if Lord Clanross is an amiable youth, and, as he is a real lord, though, perhaps, a poor one, I see no reason why—"

"Miss Brightwen! dear me! how can you be so officious? see, Marcus, she is leading Julia away; but, oh, how bright our little cousin's eyes look! and how high her colour is; whatever that Adonis said, it was no doubt very delightful!"

As Julia turned from Lord Clanross, the thin scarf which she wore was blown by the breeze against his mouth, and he held it there, imprinting on it so fervent a kiss; and as he did so, Captain Fortescue, as if thinking he presumed too much, rather pettishly snatched it from him, and gave the end to Julia, who blushed still more at the second than the first action, for she feared that Marcus thought she had encouraged the young peer to be so familiar, and that she ought to have done what he did, and looked as indignant; but Miss Brightwen did not look reprovingly; Lady Helena looked nothing but delight, she would therefore have been cheered again, had not Captain Fortescue looked so grave, and, as she feared, so stern.

"What is all this, Marcus?" said Lady Helena, taking him on one side; "why do you so evidently disapprove the young peer's gallantry to Miss Villeroy?"

"I disapprove! indeed you wrong me; but, surely, it was not quite decorous to kiss her scarf?"

"I see no harm in it, if he be a youth of good character, and would make Julia happy; really, Marcus, you seem so very slow in replying to what I say, that, I fear, Lord Clanross is not what he ought to be."

Captain Fortescue was, indeed, surprised at his own unwillingness to reply, as on all other occasions praises of the noble boy were common and dear to his lips, but no ungenerous feeling, however powerful, could long hold dominion over him, and he, at length, gravely replied, "Were Clanross a few years older, Helena, he is all I could desire for the husband of my sister; I leave you to judge, therefore, if I can disapprove of him as the lover of Miss Villeroy?"

"Then why did you look so sternly and oddly just now?"

"Because—because I was rather hurt to see how like Julia is to the rest of her sex—how easily caught by every new flatterer."

"But who ever flattered the poor child before? not you, Marcus, I am sure; at least I never heard you."

"Why no—I never absolutely flattered her, but—"

"Take care, Marcus, or I shall suspect you are jealous."

"Jealous! *I* jealous, Helena! absurd."

Here he suddenly shook off her arm and joined Mr. Mansfeld, who was sporting his airs and graces in the midst of a laughing group on the deck. Lady Helena immediately took the arm of Julia, and looking archly in her face, hoped she was satisfied with her last partner.

"Oh, quite delighted! he is so sensible and agreeable!"

"And so handsome too!"

"Is he?"

"Hypocrite! do you not know that he is."

"No, indeed; I only know that he adores your brother."

"So so—all is explained, to my satisfaction at least," said Lady Helena, smiling at Miss Brightwen, "and so Lord Clanross entertained you, not with your own praises, but those of Marcus."

"To be sure, or he would not have entertained me at all."

"Well; and are you going to dance with him again?"

"Oh yes—the two next dances."

"No, no; that would be too particular! Marcus would not approve that, nor my mother neither; you must dance two dances with some one else, before he takes you out again."

"Indeed! then I would not dance with him on any account; but why should Captain Fortescue disapprove? is it very improper?"

"Why not, very—but I think you

had better dance the two next with Marcus."

"Oh, certainly, if he likes it!"

"I will ask him."

But though Captain Fortescue thought Julia ought not to dance four dances together with any man, except he were an accepted lover, he would not dance with her himself, but preferred introducing Mansfeldt to her, having undertaken to settle the point with Lord Clanross.

Poor Julia was excessively mortified to find that she must give up Lord Clanross for Mansfeldt, and not for Captain Fortescue, especially as she was too unsophisticated, and too unversed in the obliquities and caprices of fashion to relish the eccentricities, or as she denominated it, the assurance and vulgar familiarity of Mr. Mansfeldt; but he was judged a proper person to dance with her, by the man whose will was her law, and she submitted to her fate with as much cheerfulness as she could assume; she could not, however, help assuring Lord Clanross of her inten-

tion to dance the two next dances with him, with a degree of eager pleasure and interest, that deepened the gloom now gathering on the brow of Captain Fortescue, and he turned away, saying to himself, yes, all women are alike; there is no steadiness of attachment in them! how deceived I have been in this girl!—she seemed to have a heart. Julia's eyes, meanwhile, followed him with anxious concern, for his manner towards her was cold, and though she knew he was not otherwise engaged, he had not thought fit to dance with her; but she was soon rouzed from her melancholy reverie by the voice of her partner—"Shall I call Fortescue back Julia?" said he.

"Did you speak to me, sir?" she replied; confused at the question, and half angry at the familiarity.

"Yes, to be sure; is not your name Julia—are not your eyes following Marcus, as if you wished him to return?"

"No, indeed, sir; I did not want him to return, for the dance is going to begin."

"For the dance is going to begin! Oh, then, if it were not going to begin, you would want him, being unable to endure the fatiguing company of Miles Mansfeldt —bad taste that, fair Villeroy! I dare say you neither like deviled biscuit, nor olives."

"I never tasted either, sir."

"No, I dare say not—a plain boiled and roast girl, 'pon honor!—poor thing!—but you will have better taste in time. Now, I dare say, you will prefer that every day John Bull dish, Marcus Fortescue, to me the desired of all men of fashion and taste, to give a relish to their wine, and poignancy to their entertainments."

"Indeed, I do, sir," cried Julia.

"Frank enough, that; but, as I said before, you will know better in time."

"Never, sir—dear me, why does not the dance begin?"

"And, oh, when will it end, say I? Upon my soul, Julia, I only dance with you to please Marcus. As you like plain speaking, you shall have it, my dear. Girls are odious things, like spring chick-

ens—no taste—want green pease and plenty of pepper to get them down at all."

Julia could not help laughing at the queerness and impudence of this speech, nor at the affectation of the manner; on which Mansfeldt conceitedly exclaimed—"There, I knew I should catch you at last, you will admire, me, pretty face, beyond any thing in the world in time; and if you behave well, perhaps I may make you the fashion."

Here the quadrille began, and their conversation was, to Julia's relief, suspended, and her attention pleasantly engaged by watching the dancing of her partner, when not dancing herself. It partook of the affected eccentricity of his character, and was sometimes in the first stile of excellence, and then so languid and so lame, that Julia asked him if he was ill; on which mimicking her voice and girlish manner, he replied, "Only got a bone in my leg;" in a way that convulsed all who heard him with laughter.

When the quadrille was ended, Mans-

feldt led Julia to a seat apart, but she preferred, she said, going to Miss Brightwen; consciousness and delicacy, however, withheld her when she saw that Captain Fortescue was sitting by her, and she returned to the seat which Mansfeldt had provided.

"Mutability!—thy name is woman!" cried Mansfeldt, "but I want to talk to that dark-eyed madona myself, so I shall call her to us; what is her name?"

"Brightwen."

"And what else?"

"Sophia."

"Here, Sophia!" cried Mansfeldt, beckoning as he spoke.

She saw the motion, but did not hear the call, and obeyed it; Captain Fortescue conducting her. They found Julia with an agitated manner, and a flushed cheek, and overheard her say with no common indignation, "You are welcome, sir, to call me Julia, though I think it vulgar and too familiar, sir, but I will allow no one to take liberties with Miss Brightwen: I

never presumed to call her Sophia, or Sophy, in my life, and no one shall treat her with disrespect in my presence."

The girl has a heart then, thought Captain Fortescue, looking on Julia with eyes of approving kindness, while Sophia took the seat next her, and asked what was the subject of dispute?

Mansfeldt, meanwhile, was putting his hand, alternately, to either cheek. "She slapped me on both cheeks, 'pon honor!" cried he.

"Slapped you, sir!"

"Metaphorically, I mean, not literally. Fair Amazon!—good bye!—can dance no more with you, bright-eyed Thalestris!"

"Fortescue, I pray tame your young vixens for yourself in future, break in your own fillies!"

"A word with you, Mr. Mansfeldt," replied Captain Fortescue, with a flashing eye, leading him away as he spoke; what he said I know not, but in a short time they returned arm in arm, much to the relief of Miss Brightwen, who, though she

did not impart her fears to Julia, had apprehended an angry conversation between them; and Mansfeldt entreated Julia to forgive all his faults of omission and commission; to excuse language which he meant, he owned, to puzzle, but not offend her, and to allow him to lead her to the dance again. Julia was quite willing to grant every request but the last; to do that she peremptorily refused, though Mansfeldt told her, an overt act of forgiveness was necessary to prove to him that he was forgiven; but she persisted in her refusal, and Miss Brightwen assured him that, as he had informed Miss Villeroy, he danced with her only to please Captain Fortescue, she was unwilling to burthen that gentleman, unnecessarily, with obligations.

From this decision, spoken with a firmness and dignity of manner which awed Mansfeldt in spite of himself, he felt that there was no appeal; and as Fortescue's countenance shewed that he approved what Miss Brightwen said, he

bowed affectedly and retired, but whispered to a gentleman near him, as he passed, and loud enough to be heard, that Sophy, the A B C teacher, was, he saw, disposed to shake her ferule over him, and that he had such a horror of governesses, since he went to his first school, and was forced to sit still, that he always ran away from a pedagogue in petticoats.

"Who can this Mr. Mansfeldt be?" said Sophia to Lady Helena, on the very first opportunity; "and why is a man of such offensive manners tolerated in the circles in which I see him?"

As my reader may wish to ask the same question, I will endeavour to answer it. Miles Mansfeldt was the son of a lucky father, a person who, by assisting to build up the fortune of a man of notoriety in his day, insured his own,—and having an office of trust about the court, was able to give his son a footing in high society, to which neither his birth, nor his real merit entitled him, and which his income on his father's death was not sufficient to enable him to keep.

But Mansfeldt had much shrewdness, some talent, great observation, and a thorough acquaintance with the weakness and the wants of those amongst whom the chances of life had thrown him;—he knew that, as the worn out, because ever pampered, palate of the epicure requires deviled biscuit and fried bones to provoke it to fresh exertions,—so the worn out sensibilities, and the indolent indifference of idle men of fashion, requires the odd, the uncommon, and the queer, to rouze their torpid faculties into sufficient exertion to enable them to lounge pleasantly through the day, and that the man who can make them laugh at his own expense, or that of other people, is sure of becoming to them a necessary of life, till he is supplanted by something newer, and more cleverly absurd than himself—especially if he can exite wonder in those who have long ceased to wonder at any thing, and who are ready to exclaim, that there is nothing new under the sun; and that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Mansfieldt

therefore undertook not only to make lords and ladies, and persons of fashion laugh, but wonder also;—wonder at his queer similies, laugh at his ready application of them, and still more at his excessive impudences, and even ill-bred daring;—but as he usually contrived to let an excessive respect for rank peep through the familiarity with which he addressed it, and gave himself the appearance of acting a part, as if he was only making a buffoon of himself to entertain those who were nearly past the power of being entertained, he became at length a privileged person; and as he danced well, dressed well, wrote epigrams, drew caricatures, and sang comic songs, and was an admirable mimic, no party was complete without Miles Mansfieldt, and his sayings were retailed by the great, the beautiful, and even by the intellectual—since what they wanted in wit they made up in oddity. However, at the time of which I am writing, he was degenerating fast into vulgar familiarity, unredeemed by humour,

and many besides Sophia Brightwen and Julia, were beginning to ask, who can this Mr. Mansfeldt be? and why is he here?

Lady Helena could only say that she found Miles Mansfeldt in possession of a certain sort of power, a sort of patent place about fashion's court, which he had, she concluded, purchased in some way or other, with certain perquisites annexed to it, namely, the liberty of dispensing with the common forms of society, and giving, and withholding names and titles as caprice and impudence dictated;—but she supposed his would be like other unnecessary offices, abolished by modern reformers in the state of fashion—and she thought it very evident that he had long ceased to be on the civil list. To which punning truth her auditors readily assented: while Lady Helena was giving this sketch of Mansfeldt, Lord Clanross came to claim the hand of Julia, who yielded it with such pleased alacrity, that Fortescue, who, though at a distance, was

looking at the group with fixed attention, turned half-indignantly away—for though the pride of man as yet forbade him to own it to himself, he had had pleasure in believing the heart of Julia was his, and wounded as his own had been by the falsehood of one woman, there had been something healing and delightful to him in the belief that he was loved with grateful tenderness by another of the sex, and one whose notice and regard would soon, he knew, be eagerly sought for and greedily coveted. That time was come,—Julia was no sooner seen than she was admired and courted, and his fancied hold on her affections seemed to him to have dwindled entirely away.

"There," said he again, turning to look at them in spite of himself.

"How she smiles on him while he speaks to her! and how delighted, how animated she looks! I wonder why Clanross does not look equally happy!" but it was evident that he did not, and when Julia was called away from him by Sophia

to go and speak to Lady Erpingham, Lord Clanross approached him with folded arms, with a countenance expressive of any thing but satisfaction.

"What is the matter, Clanross?" said Captain Fortescue; "has the smile of youth and beauty a saddening, rather than enlivening power?"

"Yes, sir, when that smile is for another, not for me."

"What do you mean?"

"Is it possible, Captain Fortescue, that you do not know? Miss Villeroy smiles on me only, because I talk to her of you, and in your praise; and this very moment, when she left me, she said, 'Well, be sure to recollect some more anecdotes of my preserver, to tell me when I come back to you.'"

Fortescue blushed—uttered a pooh! pooh!—nonsense! it is all gratitude, I assure you: but he was ashamed to feel what a weight was instantly removed from his brow, and with what complacency he looked around him, and especially on Lord

Clanross; on Julia he did not dare to look, lest his countenance should express too strongly the revulsion which had taken place in his feelings; and he was glad to find immediate occupation in obeying the wishes of Lady Erpingham, who thought the elegant cold collation which had been prepared on board ship, had better be eaten on shore, as a wind had sprung up, which was likely to endanger the comfort of many of the guests. Accordingly the boats were gotten ready, the debarkation began, and by the time the whole party was landed at the pavilion, Captain Fortescue was again master of his feelings and his looks; during the rest of the day nothing occurred worthy of particular notice, except that an accident which called forth the fears of Julia for the life of Captain Fortescue, was the means of gratifying the feelings of the latter, and wounding those of her young admirer, Lord Clanross. A rash, unthinking boy took up a gun, which he found lying on a bench in the garden, with which a servant had been

shooting sparrows, and aimed it at Marcus, who was walking with Julia; it went off and the shot hit him in the face. Julia seeing the blood flow, and terrified also at the suddenness of the explosion, rent the air with her cries, and looked at him with such an agonized expression of tenderness, that Miss Brightwen was very glad she was beheld and heard by no other by-stander than herself; and Lady Helena was not less delighted to observe that Fortescue assured the almost fainting girl that he was only slightly hurt, in a voice and manner almost as tender as the one to which he replied. And when Lord Clanross hastened to the spot with the rest of the company, to enquire into the result of the accident, he saw enough in Julia's still, unsubdued terror, to overcloud his brow, and destroy his enjoyment for the rest of the evening.

"Poor youth!" said Sophia to Lady Helena, when they retired for the night.

"Nay, nay, be not alarmed for him," replied Lady Helena, "he will take no

harm, I believe; he is young enough and susceptible enough to fall in love with every pretty girl whom he sees, and if she will not have him another may, and the noble Cupid will be happy at last; when he first saw me, he was *perce de mille dards,* but I was in a cold, haughty humour, and my ice smothered his fire instantly; but Julia's deceitful smiles blew it up into a flame; I really pitied him when he found out that to her he shone only with reflected light."

"And, pray Lady Helena," said Sophia, "with what light did that odd-looking young man shine, who engrossed so much of your attention during the day?"

"Odd-looking only!—ugly you mean."

"Why, yes, ugly if you will allow me to say so."

"But he is very agreeable; that is, he answered all my purposes, and gratified all my feelings."

"Indeed! and who is this favoured man?"

"A married man, my dear questioner."

"Surprizing! then he too shines, I

suspect, with that reflected light of which you were talking."

"He does; for he married Lord Restormel's first cousin, and, during the father's life, as it was a marriage against the consent of parents, he and his wife would nearly have starved but for Restormel's generosity, and, in short, it did my heart good to hear such traits of true nobleness of nature, and considerate delicacy, as he told me of my brother's friend."

"And did it do your heart good only, dear Lady Helena?"

"Why, I do not exactly know; for I own that I think too much of this man already, as, should we meet, there is very little chance of his liking me; still, still we do meet, and my fate is determined; I have resolved to discourage all other pretenders, though I am equally determined never to yield long to the miseries of a hopeless passion; for that, I trust, I am too proud, and too strong-minded; and, unlike poor Julia, I shall never pine away the victim of ill-requited tenderness."

"And why do you think that Julia would so yield, and so pine? Is it possible that you do not see in her the most decided candidate for this sort of self-devotion?"

"What could save her if Marcus were to marry another, or prove in any way unworthy of her devoted attachment?"

"Principle—while there is a hope of a return, and there is no crime in loving her preserver, for it was gratitude in her that led to love; she will persevere, and she will suffer, perhaps, from the torments of suspense and anxiety; but, depend on it, that girlish, unresisting as she seems, Julia's piety and sense of right would enable her to bear up against trials which might, perhaps, prove too much for you."

"If so, how wisely must you have formed her heart and mind, and how could you bestow on her this counteracting energy."

"Merely by making her a Christian, a practical Christian, and teaching her the duties of submission to her heavenly

Parent: and the obedience to the will of a nominal earthly one, to which she was obliged, that necessarily submitted, will, in little things, has been, believe me, an excellent preparation to submission in great things."

"Alas!" cried Lady Helena, her fine eyes filling with tears, "if this preparation be necessary to enable one to bear the probable trials of life, what will become of me when the hour of trial comes?"

"Only learn, dear young friend, to distrust your own strength, and to cast your own cares on him who is able to carry you through all trial, and you need not fear."

Lady Helena shook her head, as if distrusting, or unable to apply to the remedy, and retired to her chamber. The fortnight that followed was one of great happiness to Julia, and of pleasing expectation to her friends, for Fortescue rarely left the pavilion, and he was now never tired of correcting Julia's drawings, or of teaching her new music; and Lady Helena

remarked in silence, that Marcus now was more eager to teach Julia new duets than new songs; and that Moore's tenderest words lost none of their tenderness when uttered by either party. Lord Clanross, meanwhile, visited daily at the pavilion, and implicitly relying on Marcus's assurances in former days, that he should never marry, he buoyed himself up with the hope, that his devoted attentions, and ardent love would, in time, induce Julia to transfer her affections from one who could not return it, to one on whom it would bestow happiness the most perfect; still there were moments when he believed it impossible for Captain Fortescue to resist the ill-concealed regard of such a fascinating girl; nor could he fail to observe, that however unlike a lover his friend seemed when Julia's attention was wholly devoted to him, his manner assumed all the restless and almost pettish jealousy of one, whenever she seemed engrossed by his conversation, and disposed to smile on his assiduities. If he be jea-

lous of her, he can and does love, thought he; all my hopes are vain; but self-love has its jealousies as well as love, and so like is the false to the true, that it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other. But even at these moments of anxiety, Lord Clanross shewed the truth of Lady Helena's observations on him, for if she smiled on him, and tried to share his attentions with Julia, she could always succeed in her attempt; and he said within himself, had she smiled and talked thus when I first saw her, she would have been the choice of my heart; and Lady Helena, whenever she heard his deep sigh, and saw his jealous glance at Julia and her brother, could scarcely refrain from patting him on the arm, and saying, never mind, you may suffer for awhile, but the pang will soon be over. Lord Clanross, however, no doubt, thought differently; as the lover who believes he can never cease to love, is ceasing to love already; a circumstance now took place which made him resolve to bear his state of suspense no longer, but

avow his passion to the object of it; for, by the death of a distant relation, he became possessed of a considerable fortune, and was able, therefore, to offer such settlement to the heiress, as Sir George Villeroy could not but approve; still, however, he hesitated, because he was afraid of a refusal, and because he fancied that Captain Fortescue wore every day more and more the air of a declared lover; he therefore resolved to write to him, as to write was more easy than to speak on such a subject, and request to know what was his situation, or what were his intentions with regard to Miss Villeroy: he did so, and it was with more emotion than he had imagined possible, that Fortescue received and read this letter, he could easily say what was his situation, but what were his intentions with regard to Julia, it was not so easy for him to declare; however, Lord Clanross did not require an immediate answer, as he was gone to London on law business, and he trusted that before his return he should know his own mind;

but he could not fail to observe what an effect this letter had on his feelings towards Julia; he was now certain that the moment was arrived when his attentions might be proved beyond dispute to have interfered with her forming a proper and desirable marriage, as it was evident that while he remained near her, even though not attentive to her himself, her heart was too much prepossessed in his favour to allow her to make another choice—what was he then in honour and in justice to do? was he to absent himself immediately? or was he to conquer his own heart, and offer himself to her acceptance? But could he do this? was his attachment to another woman sufficiently subdued? While these thoughts were passing in his mind, he could not help regarding Julia with more tenderness than ever, for he was either on the point of making her his own, or of surrendering her to the claims of another; if he did the former, he, spite of himself, dwelt with delightful anticipation on the pleasure of being beloved by so pure and

devoted a heart; and if he did the latter, he shrunk with painful pity from inflicting on her that misery which he had endured himself, for he believed that for some time at least Julia would be unhappy, though, ultimately she might be happy with another man, and rejoice that she had not married the object of her first attachment. But was it possible for him to resolve to afflict so affectionate a heart, even for a short period? Fortescue thought not, as he hung over her while she sung or drew, and saw her modest yet expressive eyes raised to his as if asking for that approbation of her efforts which was the only reward she sought or desired. At these moments there was so much answering love in his voice, look, and manner, that the whole family, and even Miss Brightwen herself, were convinced that in a very short time they should be made happy by seeing Julia the betrothed wife of Marcus; and in spite of her well principled caution, Sophia could not help joining Lady Helena in congratulating Julia on having at length

gained the heart of the man who had long been in possession of hers. Fortescue himself had retired to rest that night, believing that his mind was made up, his fate decided, and his heart satisfied; he, therefore, wrote as follows to Lord Clanross:—

"MY DEAR LORD,

"Ere this letter reaches you, I shall have come forward as a candidate for the love of Miss Villeroy; with what success I cannot presume to anticipate; but in a nature so grateful and so generous as her's, it is very likely that the obligation which she thinks she owes me, will influence her to smile on my suit, in preference to that of a younger and handsomer man. However, you shall know the result of my application as soon as I know it myself. I shall console myself for your disappointment, should it take place, dear Clanross, by the hope that as you have not been much with Miss Villeroy, your attachment cannot be strong enough to cloud over your brilliant prospects for any considerable period. I, on the contrary, have

had so many opportunities of witnessing the excellence of her heart and character, that I soon felt my aversion to marriage insensibly fade away, and my heart re-awaken to feelings, which I thought extinct in it for ever."

Here Fortescue laid down his pen, for the image of his first love came over his mind; but that of Julia Villeroy soon replaced it, and he went to bed decided and happy.

The next morning there was much less conversation at the breakfast-table than had ever been before, but never so much conscious satisfaction. Julia, indeed, was more full of blushes, and her eyes more commonly downcast than ever, especially when Fortescue, with pleased alacrity, busied himself in rendering her those little attentions by which love delights to shew itself, and of which it is so delightful to be the object of one moment; he had to clasp her bracelet round her sleeve; next, to replace the scarf that had deserted her shoulder; now, to pick up her handker-

chief; in short, he had no eyes, no ears, but for her and her wants; and it was evident to the lookers on, that as soon as breakfast was over, he would seek an opportunity to make a declaration of love, and Julia's fate and his own be unequivocally decided.

But who shall dare to calculate with any certainty on the chances of futurity? It is curious to observe how often events, trivial both in reality and in appearance at the time of their occurring, are sometimes most important in their operation on the fate of those concerned in them; and how often the unguarded utterer of a severe and just reproof has had to rue, perhaps, through life, the result of the enmity which that reproof excited.

Julia Villeroy had entirely forgotten that she had inflicted a wound on the self-love of Miles Mansfeldt, and if she thought of him, she did so with indifference, not resentment; but he had not forgotten the wound his self-love had received, and he remembered her with malignity and

vindictiveness; to him, therefore, the prospect of her being doomed to pine in hopeless love for his friend, Captain Fortescue, was replete with mean satisfaction; and when he saw reason to believe that her passion would be returned, he was filled with mortification and inquietude; but the latter feeling had more causes than one. Mansfeldt, in addition to other vices, had the vice of gaming, and the greatest part of his property had long ago been played away; he had, consequently, often been in very distressed circumstances; as though on the whole a lucky gamester, there were times when his luck entirely deserted him.

At these times Captain Fortescue, who gained considerable prize-money during the war, had generously stepped forward to assist a man whose pleasantries had often enabled him to wear away many a miserable hour, and never had Mansfeldt applied to him for relief in vain. But if he married Julia Villeroy, whose unsophisticated taste he knew he was not likely

to please, and whose influence over her husband he believed would be unbounded, he feared that he should no longer be an ever-welcome visitor to Fortescue, and that the hand and the heart once so open to his tale of distress, would be closed against him for ever. It was, therefore, worth his while to try to prevent the marriage, and he laid his plans accordingly.

On their way from the continent, Mrs. Tyrawley and her husband landed at Brighton, and thence proceeded to Bognor, whence Mansfeldt, who was staying there, was in the habit of bringing over parties, either by land or by water, to see the pavilion, usually coming at those hours when he knew the earl and his family were likely to be taking their morning drives or sail; but when Mr. and Mrs. Tyrawley arrived, and the latter expressed a strong desire to see a spot which she had so often heard Captain Fortescue praise, he expressed his readiness to be her escort, but named as the proper time for setting off, an hour, when

Marcus, he knew, would be at home, and could not fail to meet and to behold this destroyer of his peace; nor was the lady at all averse to see Fortescue again; she was desirous of proving whether he had really broken her chain, as she had heard with a contemptible, but very natural jealousy, that her devoted and long faithful admirer was on the point of marrying a young and beautiful heiress, to whom he was said to be most tenderly attached.

"This last part of the story," said the artful Mansfeldt to her, "I totally disbelieve; the man who has ever truly loved you, Lucy, cannot, I am sure, love such an insipid doll as Julia Villeroy; and as I know he will be very wretched if he marries her, I wish you would throw yourself in his way, and should the now-smothered flame burn out afresh, Fortescue will be saved from destruction, and you will have the satisfaction of being his preserver."

"That would be joy to me, indeed, as I fear I used him very ill, poor fellow," was the coquette's apt reply, and she prepared

for the rencontre with the most impatient alacrity.

" See, see Marcus! there is a sailing-boat making for the shore," cried Lady Helena, " and full of ladies and gentlemen too."

" So there is," he replied; " and, if I mistake not, Mansfeldt is on board: whom is he bringing now, I wonder, and at this hour! for the horses are round. It is very inconvenient, I was just going to drive Miss Villeroy out in the pony chaise."

" Well! surely, you need not wait to receive him, or his guests;—away with you."

" Not so, Helena, he sees that I know him, and I would not willingly run the risk of hurting his feelings." The truth was, that Fortescue knew Mansfeldt wanted to borrow money of him, and he feared that he would suppose he wished to avoid him on that account. Accordingly, Fortescue hastened to the shore to assist the party to land, and he observed, with some surprise, the well acted reluctance of Mansfeldt to receive his assistance.

"No, no, Fortescue, do not trouble yourself; I was sure you would be out making love in the woods with your Phillida, or I would not have come."

"How unfortunate! he added, in a whisper, "but she would come—I could not keep her away."

"She would come!—who would come and what does all this mean?" thought Fortescue.

There was now only one lady to assist from the boat, and she was closely veiled. Mansfeldt pretended to press forward to her assistance, but he took care to make a false step, which, by forcing the boat on one side, seemed to endanger the safety of the lady, who eagerly stretched out her hand to catch hold of Captain Fortescue; he as readily met her grasp, and assisted her to land; but, whether from carelessness, emotion, or design, her foot slipped, and to save herself from falling, she was forced to encircle the neck of her supporter with her arm. At this moment her veil dropped off, and he beheld the woman whom he

had so fatally adored—the woman, whom he had resolved never to behold again; and whose allurements, and whose falsehood he had hoped to forget in the possession of innocence, tenderness, and beauty. But there she stood, with eyes imploring pardon! eyes full of tears, of tenderness, and irresistible power; her fine arm still resting on him as if she was too much agitated to stand without support; and all the witchery of her form and manner, armed in all its dangerous power against his peace, and him.

Fortescue tried to shake off her hold; he tried to avert his eyes from her, but it was impossible. The days of his earliest tenderness—the day of his youthful happiness and fondest hopes stole over his recollection; she looked on him as she had then looked; her hand courted the grasp of his as if it had never, never been given to another; and it was not till he remembered that he held the wife of another man, that he had power to turn away from her with abhorrence, and uttering—cruel,

accursed chance! to rush from her presence, and seizing his servant's horse, to ride far away from her and her destructive fascinations.

CHAP. VII.

THE windows of the breakfast-room overlooked the spot where this scene was passing, and at those windows stood the happy group which Fortescue, impelled by kindness, had left to go and meet Mansfeldt; but no one but Lady Helena knew Mrs. Tyrawly personally, and turning very pale, she clasped her hands together and exclaimed—"'Tis she, 'tis she herself! and Marcus will be again lost! Look, look, there he goes! O, poor, poor Marcus."

"What can you mean?" cried Lord Erpingham, and whom did you see?"

"Who! that woman, Mrs. Tyrawley."

"Impossible!" he returned.

"Who should presume to bring her hither! you must be deceived, Helena," said Lady Erpingham—no one could do so improper a thing."

"Yes, Mansfeldt, for he dares do any thing."

"Nay, nay Helena, you are too severe; and surely the lady herself was incapable of so indelicate a proceeding."

"My dearest mother, do not irritate me by saying any thing palliating of that woman! I tell you I saw her and— but where are Julia and Miss Brightwen?" They had retired to their own apartment unperceived.

Sophia and Julia had both seen the expression of Fortescue's countenance as he turned from the lady, who was leaning on him, and rushed towards his horse; and as soon as she heard the name of Mrs. Tyrawley, Miss Brightwen hurried her almost insensible pupil away,—she felt that the sorrows of ill-requited tenderness were too sacred to be seen by the eyes of any one; and when she reached their apartments she delicately offered to leave the agonized girl alone;—but Julia felt her presence a support, and being well aware of the extent of her calamity, for how could Captain Fortescue marry one woman while his feelings were still so evidently

under the dominion of another, she gave way to an immoderate burst of sorrow, upon the sympathizing and supporting bosom of her friend,—but it was not long before her well-regulated mind was able to listen to the voice of consolation. Sophia offered it thus—" What a mercy it is that this meeting did not take place after you were married, instead of before! What an escape have you not had!"

At first poor Julia was inclined to dispute the truth of the observation, and to believe, that if she had been his wife, her devoted love would have so much won upon his heart, that it would have been proof against the power of this unworthy woman: but Sophia tried to convince her that she thought too highly of the nature of the other sex, in attributing such influence to the tenderness of a virtuous wife, when put in competition with the blandishments of a mistress whom the husband had loved with all the ardour of a first passion—and that Captain Fortescue

having proved his own remaining weakness to himself, could not now, as an honorable man, become the husband of any woman.

Lady Helena, meanwhile, was impelled by affectionate pity, but, withheld by delicacy from seeking the afflicted Julia, especially as she could not give satisfactory answer to the qestions which Julia would naturally put to her, "Whither is your poor brother gone, and when will he come back?" for Captain Fortescue had said to his servant as he mounted his horse, "I shall not be back for some days." Still she could not help going to Julia's apartment, and was on the point of reaching it when the sight of Mansfeldt, nodding and smirking at the hall window, and about to knock at the door, made her hurry back again; and with a countenance of indignant resentment she returned to her mother and the earl.

"There is Mansfeldt at the door," said she, "coming, as I suspect, to triumph in the mischief he has done!"

"Nay, Helena, surely he could not do

the mischief designedly, he is not a fiend."

"My dearest mother, he might think it only a good joke."

"Whatever he thought it, here he shall not come. It was a liberty," cried Lord Erpingham, "in Mansfeldt, or in any man, to bring Mrs. Tyrawley hither, and self-respect obliges me to resent it."

Here the earl entered the hall, followed by Lady Helena, just as Mansfeldt was admitted: spite of his habitual impudence he was awed by the lofty carriage, and cold dignity of the earl, as he shrunk proudly from his offered hand; nor could his malignant, light grey eye, meet with any steadiness the flashing eyes and searching glance of Lady Helena, while a smile of contempt played *cordently* on her beautiful lip.

"My lord, I—I am sorry; hoped to find you all out, or I should not——" was all he could at first say.

Here Lord Erpingham interrupted him with—"But as you find us all at-home, Mr.

Mansfeldt, you and your party had better re-embark with all possible expedition." So saying he turned his back on him.

The countess, fearing her lord had been too severe, now came forward, and said, "Mr. Mansfeldt, my lord and I do not suppose you meant to do harm by coming so accompanied."

"Me, countess! oh, dear no, 'pon my honor, no—and sweet Helena, I—"

"Lady Helena Fortescue is my name, sir," she replied, "and I am Helena to those only whom I respect and esteem."

"In attitudes, I protest," cried Mansfeldt, "but I assert my entire innocence of any design to—"

"Sir," cried Lord Erpingham, "had I believed that you did not so come hither, I would not have condescended to hold with you, even this short colloquy. Good morning. Drummond open the door for Mr. Mansfeldt."

"My lady, the Right Honorable Lady Helena Fortescue, one word with you," said the undaunted Mansfeldt. But

regarding him, with a look of such indignant contempt, that even he was confounded by it, she waved him from her with a haughty and scornful air, and followed her proudly bowing father, and her kindly curtsying mother into the drawing-room. And Mansfeldt was forced to leave the house unheard.

"Helena," said the earl, who began to think his daughter's suspicions of Mansfeldt just—"Helena, I shall give orders that in future I am never at-home to Mr. Mansfeldt."

"Poor man," said Lady Erpingham—"but if he should be innocent of any design!"

"Why even then his want of feeling in intruding himself on us at such a moment, and his impertinence to Helena, ought to be resented, and I wonder that I have even been prevailed upon to bear with him so long."

"Poor man—but as—"

"Lady Erpingham say no more! there

are times and seasons when indulgence degenerates into weakness, and this would be one of them."

The benevolent pleader unable to resist the words of her husband, and the looks of her daughter, obeyed and was silent.

"Now I will go to dear Julia," said Lady Helena.

"Aye, do my dear, and tell her how bitterly we feel our disappointment, and that both your mother and myself long to express to her our regrets, and how tenderly endeared she is to us by this trial inflicted on her."

"Oh, dear! no papa; you had better take no notice to her whatever of what has occurred when you meet. The subject was always too delicate a one to discuss with her, and now it is more sacred still!"

"Well, I believe you are right; yet when I see this beloved girl, I shall scarcely be able to refrain from tears."

"Indeed you must try, mamma; but

I must go, or she will wonder why I stay away, though she may not wish to see me."

Julia was beginning to wonder at not seeing her, when Lady Helena knocked at the door. It was opened by Julia herself, and with a countenance so calm, so resigned, yet, at the same time, so sorrowful, that Lady Helena was even more affected then if she had found her in tears; and her own assumed composure utterly forsook her.

"Oh, my poor infatuated brother!" she exclaimed, throwing herself on Julia's neck! "Miss Brightwen! dear, dear friend, do not, do not hate poor Marcus."

"Hate him," cried Julia, struggling with her tears; "who could ever hate your brother! not Miss Brightwen, I am sure—no, nor any one: what has he done to deserve hatred?—no, no, he deserves pity, but not hate; but where is he?"

As Lady Helena expected, her answer was by no means satisfactory, and fears for Captain Fortescue wrung from poor

Julia expressions of agony, and signs of agitation which her sense of his own disappointment had never occasioned.

"But, I dare say, he will write soon," observed Lady Helena; and Julia, whose sweetness of nature made her ever willing to receive comfort, was comforted by the assurance.

"I hope—I trust," said Julia, "that my dear aunt and uncle do not know, do not suspect how very weak I have been; for you know it was very weak in me to be so sure, so very sure that he loved me, and my presumption is justly punished."

"Do not, dearest girl, blame yourself, blame me, blame Lady Helena, for we fed the hopes which you would not otherwise have kept alive."

"True, very true, Miss Brightwen and Julia was not presumptuous, nor was Marcus to blame; he thought himself cured, and so did the cat in the fable fancy she was really made a fine lady for life, till a mouse ran across the room, and then she could not help running after it;—but, oh

dear! oh dear! in this case Marcus was the mouse, and the cat popped upon him to destroy him; but, thank heaven! she did not destroy him! he got away from her, and, I trust, he will unhurt return."

"Return!" cried Julia, her eyes sparkling, in spite of her, at the idea.

"Return! did you say," cried Sophia, gravely, if there be any chance of that, Lady Helena, Miss Villeroy and I must go back to London directly, and I shall write to Sir George to shew him the necessity of it."

"Why, you cannot think of doing so unkind and officious a thing, Miss Brightwen?"

"Say, rather, I must do my duty; I cannot allow Miss Villeroy to remain where she will be daily in the presence of a man whom she too fondly loves, and who has shewn that he does not love her as she deserves to be loved, fondly and exclusively.—I cannot allow her to be so degraded as to wait here like a slave in a harem, till your brother may think proper

to throw the handkerchief to her; and I am sure she would not consent to such degradation herself."

"No—no, certainly not;" faltered out Julia, pressing her closed hands against her chest, as if conscious of dreadful oppression there: "Oh no, no, no; but take me away directly, if you think he will return!"

"Is this your real wish, Julia!" said Lady Helena haughtily, yet mournfully.

"Oh yes, yes! Lady Helena," cried Sophia, "I should be mortified beyond expression, if I have over-rated my pupil's sense of delicacy and self-respect, but I will put them to the trial, and I leave her alone with you, and your influence."

She then left the room, and joined the earl and countess on the lawn: she found the latter very eager to go to Julia; but Sophia, like Lady Helena, earnestly wished that, not even by any increased kindness of manner, the mortified parents should express their regret for their son's conduct, and their sense of its effects on her;

nor could they help owning, that Miss Villeroy could no longer, with any propriety, remain under the same roof with Captain Fortescue. They then took their drive as usual, and Julia did not see them till they met at dinner; but, such a dinner, contrasted with that of the day before, when all was cheerfulness, affection, and hope! Julia's only chance for composure, was keeping her eyes turned away from every one: for every eye unconsciously watched her, and expressed such affectionate sympathy and pity, that she could scarcely maintain the calmness which self-respect enjoined. Lady Helena, whose feelings were not under such control, could not endure her sense of the past and the present, but was forced to leave the table to indulge her feelings in private. The next day passed heavily along, and no letter from Captain Fortescue! the day after was also one of disappointment and uncomfortableness; but, on the fourth day from his departure, Lord Clanross arrived at the pavilion, bearing a letter from

Marcus to his fasher; Lady Helena turned very pale when the earl gave her the letter, as soon as he had read it, and said he would attend Lord Clanross to his study. The letter was as follows, and dated, London:—

"A quelque chose malheur est bon."

"My dear father, I was wishing for an excuse to leave England, when I received a letter from our dear Augustus, to say that he is at Paris, and not well there, and, therefore, wishes me to go over to him; I shall consequently set off for Dover to-night. I sent for Clanross as soon as I arrived here, and shall make him the bearer of this, begging you to smile upon the suit which he will prefer to you, and to give him every opportunity of ingratiating himself with the amiable object of his affections. I cannot give him higher praise than to say, I think him worthy of the hand and heart of Miss Villeroy; I know no other man who is. I will write to my mother as soon as I reach Paris.

Your affectionate son,

M. F.

"So then, mamma, Marcus, by these hurried lines, formally renounces all intention of offering to Julia himself, and gives her up to Lord Clanross! but I am sure she will not have him, let him be ever so worthy. I cannot bear it, mamma! I can't indeed—Julia bears the disappointment much better than I do."

"Then there is the better chance for Lord Clanross, my dear."

"Do not say so; do not say he has any chance—but see, hither comes Miss Brightwen."

"I am told you have had news of Captain Fortescue," said Sophia, "and—"

"Did Julia send you?"

"I came of my own accord, but she is anxiously expecting my return."

"There, do you read what he says, but, I think, Julia must not!—what say you?"

Sophia could not peruse such an utter downfal to all Julia's expectations without the greatest and most painful emotion: Marcus had not only given up all preten-

sions to Julia himself, but wished another man to obtain her.

"Well! Miss Brightwen—your answer!" cried the impatient Lady Helena.

However trying to her feelings, she replied, in a voice almost suffocated with tears, "Miss Villeroy must be told the whole truth, and I wish to shew her the letter."

"Take it then! I am glad you do not insist on my applying the torture to her, however salutary it may be," returned Lady Helena, and Sophia disappeared with the letter.

"Then all is over, indeed," cried Julia; "he wishes me to accept Lord Clanross! this is too, too cruel! Leave me, my dear friend; leave me alone a few minutes, that I may endeavour to obtain strength and fortitude where best they can be found; but tell them I cannot, will not see Lord Clanross."

Sophia obeyed her; and Lord Clanross, after a positive assurance from Lord Erpingham that he would forward his pre-

tensions to Julia by every means in his power, left the pavilion, declaring he should return the next day. As soon as he was gone, Julia, ashamed of giving way to the indulgence of an unreturned attachment, left her apartment unsolicited, and appeared the most cheerful of the party. The earl and countess, indeed, and Lady Helena also, were alarmed by Fortescue's letter for the health of Lord Aston, as well as distressed for the hopeless misery of his brother; and Lord Erpingham resolved to set off for Paris, if the next letter declared that the latter was not better: but the post of the next day brought a letter from Lord Aston himself, which dissipated their alarm; and the day after, one which produced an immediate change in the plans of Julia. Sophia herself was summoned away to nurse her married sister, who, in the midst of her sickness, sorrow, and indigence, had been deserted by her husband; and at all risks, therefore, and all sacrifices to herself, she felt it to be her duty to hasten to her immediately,

and not to wait for permission to do so from Sir George and Lady Villeroy; but, before she set off, a letter arrived from the latter, desiring that both Julia and her governess would return to London instantly, as Sir George had been confined to his room some time with a violent attack of the gout, and desired to see his daughter; but they must, at Sir George's particular desire, return by one of the many stages to London which passed the pavilion daily. I cannot attempt to describe the various feelings, none of which were pleasurable ones, which were experienced by the party at the pavilion on receiving this letter. Lady Helena's feelings, however, were the most agreeable, because she felt excessive indignation, and when one feels that sensation with justice, there is a degree of self-complacency mixed with it which renders it satisfactory. Positive and peremptory, however, as the summons was, Lord and Lady Erpingham resolved not to obey it, as Miss Brightwen could not accompany Julia, and it was

impossible that she could go in a stage coach alone; nor, however properly attended, could they endure the idea of her travelling in a manner so improper for her situation in life: Lady Erpingham, therefore, wrote, as well as Sophia, to inform Lady Villeroy of Miss Brightwen's enforced departure, and of her wish to send Julia home in a post-chaise with her own maid, when they reached Surrey, whither they were then going; and having sent off this letter, Lord Erpingham gave orders for their immediate removal. It was with great pain that poor Sophia prepared to leave her pupil, and that Julia saw herself obliged to be separated from her; it was the more trying to Sophia, because she thought it likely that Lady Villeroy would resent her departure so much that she would never allow her to resume her situation; but she was a little cheered by Lady Helena's assurances that she would certainly let her come back, because she could get no one to play governess to an heiress at so low a price as she did, and

could not hire a sempstress to do so much work at so low a remuneration. To be brief, Miss Brightwen set off for an obscure town in Kent early in the morning, and at noon her noble friends and their guest were on their road to their seat in Surrey; but, before they left the pavilion, Lord Clanross, contrary to the disinterested advice of Lord Erpingham, declared his love to Julia, and was instantly and decidedly refused. But to return to Gloucester-place; the first two months of Julia's absence passed heavily with her father, as he had begun to take pleasure in her company, whenever indulged in it; and, as he had discovered that Miss Brightwen was not the silent, stupid young woman which he had been taught to believe her; but his conviction that Julia was happier where she was, than she could ever be at home, reconciled him to her absence, and when he found there was a probability that her visit to his friends, would lead to her forming a desirable marriage, he ceased to express even a wish for her presence.

Lady Villeroy, meanwhile, was full of conflicting and opposite feelings on the same subject; she rejoiced in the absence of Julia and her governess, because both were become objects of interest to Sir George; and she regretted it because she missed their assistance in the labours of the needle, nor could she contemplate the probability of Julia's marriage without jealousy and dislike: for, in the first place, she knew that Sir George would, spite of her opposition, bestow on her a dower worthy of an heiress; and, in the next, she could not endure the idea of seeing such an insignificant child as Julia take precedence of her, and Lady Villeroy be forced to follow into a room the Honourable Mrs. Fortescue. But she was called from these painful considerations to the performance of active duties by the sick couch of her husband; and Julia had been absent four months before Sir George was able to leave his bed, and was well enough even to desire her presence. But at the end of that time, as he felt himself, in his own opinion, declining

fast, and as the desired union was not likely to take place, he thought he should be justified in desiring her immediate return: nor was Lady Villeroy herself averse to it now as Julia would come back as she went—subject to her controul, and not raised in consequences of being the betrothed wife of Captain Fortescue, into a rank and a degree of consideration, which would oblige her mother-in-law to grant her indulgences that would force her to incur unnecessary expense. But Lady Erpingham's letter, proposing that Julia should travel post, as Miss Brightwen could not be her travelling companion, filled her with resentment, and she vented it on Sophia exclaiming against her assurance in daring to quit her post without leave, and declaring that if she could get any one to come to her on equally low terms, she should never return to Gloucester Place. But she saw no means of avoiding the expensive journey proposed to her, when, luckily the wife of a tenant of Sir George's was, she found, coming to London, on such

a day, from the neighbourhood of Laurel Grove, and would pass the gate of the lodge. To the care of this good woman she resolved therefore to consign Julia, and taking advantage of Sir George's sleeping moments, she proposed the plan to him when he was scarcely awake, and when all he heard distinctly, was, that Julia would by that means travel home much faster than she could otherwise do. This prospect, that of Julia's returning as quick as possible, was so pleasant a one, and he was so incapable of enquiring into the how and the wherefore, that he eagerly exclaimed,

"Oh, yes—let her come so, and the sooner and the quicker the better."

"Then you approve my plan," returned Lady Villeroy.

"To be sure; there, there,—close the curtains for pity's sake."

This was all Lady Villeroy wanted—and she wrote accordingly, not without considerable pleasure while she reflected

that she was thus issuing what might be considered as degrading orders to a girl, whom she had recently expected would be elevated above her, and rendered independent of her further control by an honorable marriage. But whatever were the feelings with which this letter was written, it was received with one feeling only, that of violent indignation by the family. Lady Erpingham, indeed, in her mild and candid manner, observed, that Julia would perhaps be better protected on the road in the coach, and safer in case of accidents than if she had gone in a chaise with a maid-servant only;—but Lady Helena would not listen to any excuse for so odious a proceeding, and Julia, though feelings of pride were unknown to her, felt her eyes fill with tears at the consciousness that Lady Villeroy, with the approbation of Sir George, had proposed a plan for her journey which was considered as a degrading one by her noble friends.

"Papa," cried Lady Helena, "do

write and say that as Sir George is too poor to do it, you will send Julia home in a post-chaise, and pay all expenses.

"Dear Lady Helena, do not talk so!" said Julia, "papa is not poor, nor is he mean, and I am sure he would not suffer—nay, it is all Lady Villeroy's doing—it is indeed."

"Well done, orator Julia!" cried Lady Helena, "to one part of your argument I agree—Sir George is not mean, and I dare say he would not suffer my papa to pay your expenses."

"Helena," said Lord Erpingham, angrily, "you might have spared your friend's feelings this unnecessary shock.—I will not wound Sir George's, by allowing our dear Julia to disobey the orders given, unless we can find a more suitable and as cheap a conveyance.—If we did not expect company at the house to-day, which I cannot leave, I would myself convey her to town, but I can spare neither time, carriage, nor horses."

"Oh, those tiresome Magnals! so their

precious presence is to prevent you from paying the dues of love and proper protection to this dear girl, papa!"

"Tiresome Magnals! for shame Helena, they are very worthy people! Worthy or not, they are our guests, Lady Helena Fortescue, and I must pay them proper respect for my own sake if not for theirs.—Miss Villeroy must, I am sorry to say, return according to the plan which her natural protectors have laid down for her, and no doubt the person selected to take care of her is respectable and trust-worthy. All I can do with propriety, I will do;—I will send one of my men-servants with her on the top of the coach;—but it would not be decorous in me to reprove Sir George Villeroy for want of proper care of his daughter—nor to affront him by measures, insinuating that those plans were influenced by an undue regard to economy."

Lady Helena said no more, as she saw that her father was determined; but she could not help, during the course of the day, muttering, in his presence, expressions

of hatred against mean maratres; and when orders were given to have a place taken in the coach for the next day, and to desire it to stop at the lodge to take up a young lady, Lady Helena begged that it might be taken in the name of Miss Julia Villeroy, daughter and sole heiress of Sir George and Lady Julia Villeroy.

"I see no necessity for that, my dear girl," coolly observed Lord Erpingham, as if he did not understand the irony of her words: "Julia is too wise not to wish to preserve her incognitia, while in a situation inferior to her pretensions, and has nothing to do but meekly to obey her father's will."

"Her father's will! my lord."

"I have said it, my lady, and your ladyship strangely overrates the hardship imposed. Our dear Julia is only seventeen, and looks much younger than she is—has not been presented—is not known; and in four hours she will be at home, without any trouble or care. Many a young lady better born than either Julia or you has travelled, I doubt not, even

without protection, on or in a stage-coach before now, during the French revolution."

"I triumph, papa, (my lord, I mean, as I am your ladyship,) but you are forced to have recourse to an extreme case to justify this, and give, as an illustration, some pennyless emigrée—but, oh, there is one marked difference! the emigrée had escaped from tyranny, and Julia is returning to it."

"Helena!" exclaimed Lady Erpingham, while her father frowned a rebuke.

Lady Helena, however, would not, could not recal her words; and, to escape the lecture she had deserved, she dragged the tearful Julia out of the room to take a walk.

The next morning, though at an early breakfast, Lady Helena still harped on Julia's journey; her manner of talking of it was changed; she wished she was going with her, especially as her papa thought it such a desirable conveyance for high-born young ladies, and earnestly hoped

that Julia would write a little book, called a Young Lady's Adventures in a Stage-Coach; she then declared, she wished she had such an opportunity of studying characters, and humbly begged to be allowed to accompany her cousin Julia.

"By all means," cried the earl. "Take physic, pomp!—expose thyself to feel what passengers feel, and know thyself a woman."

"Pomp is very much obliged to you, papa, for the permission," replied Lady Helena, smiling, "and assures you she will not forget it; she is still more obliged to you for allowing that she is a woman—an admission which my poor eighteen years never could draw from you before. But hark! I hear a horn! and, alas! not the post-horn bringing letters, but the coach-horn to bear away dear Julia. I must go and see whether she is ready."

Away she went, and full of tears herself, returned with the weeping Julia. It was even a parental leave, which her host and hostess took of their departing guest; but she went

to the coach attended by servants only, as Lady Helena was forbidden to accompany her, that the rank of the passenger might not be suspected. Lady Helena had given particular charge to the servants to ascertain the number of passengers inside and out, and what they looked like; and she heard that the person to whose care Julia was consigned was respectable-looking, and seemed very glad to see Miss Villeroy, and that there was no other passenger in the coach, but a man who seemed fast asleep in the corner.

It was sometime before Julia could prevail on herself to break from the mournful, and even tearful reverie into which she had fallen; she could not help contrasting the feelings with which she had left home, with those to which she was returning to it;—she was then full of all the hopes and the untamed vivacity of early youth, but now her prospects were blighted, her heart wrung by the sorrow of an unrequited attachment, and the vivacity of her time of life had vanished with her hopes. The marked

difference between her mode of travelling never even occurred to her; she was too wretched to give it a single thought, for there is this advantage attending conscious misery, that it renders one indifferent to external circumstances; and if Julia remembered where she was, it was with satisfaction, because she had been told that she was in the quickest conveyance possible, and would be the sooner restored to that beloved father, who was ill, and suffering.

The presence and company of Miss Brightwen she could not help regretting with excessive bitterness; but with the image of Sophia, at length returned the remembrance of her precepts, and her own unrepining patience. She would be hurt to see me thus, thought Julia; and soon after the involuntary tears were dried, and she was able to smile with her usual sweetness on the well-meant efforts of her companion to comfort and amuse her. The passenger in the corner meanwhile slept on.

When the travellers had gone about twelve or fifteen miles, a man's voice desired them to stop, and asked whether there was room inside? Julia looked out, and while thinking that both the voice and face were familiar to her, she saw that the enquirer was a groom who often attended Lady Helena; she did not speak to him, but returned his respectful obeisance in silence; but she was on the point, however, of asking him if he was going to London, as she saw him throwing a small portmanteau to the driver, when her speech was suspended by surprise, on beholding Lady Helena, dressed in her habit, her whip in her hand, evidently heated by the haste with which she had ridden, suddenly appearing at the end of a lane, and desiring admittance into the coach, motioning Julia, and her servant on the coach-box to silence, by putting her finger to her lip; Julia obeyed, but it was even with agitated delight that she saw her friend opposite to her; she eagerly asked her, in a cautious whisper, how she got

leave to come, and whither she was going?

"I did not ask for leave, I chose to think it unnecessary, after what papa said about pomp to-day,—and I am going to London."

"To London—to us!"

"No, no, not uninvited:—I am going to see my cousin, Mrs. Seybright, who will, I know, be glad to receive me for a few days, and I took this opportunity, being resolved to share your weal or woe, Julia, in every situation of life, if possible. There, there, silly girl, do not cry; and now to look about for adventures. Who is that man in the corner, or rather what sort of person is he?"

"I cannot tell:—but how sorry and angry my uncle and aunt will be when—"

"Hush! hush! they will forgive me, I am sure, before we meet again, and I will only be alive to the present moment now; besides, I wished to be incognita, and you have, by your nonsense, betrayed me to your friend."

The good woman, Mrs. Spence, was instantly beginning, with great respect, to promise, that she would not betray her lady——when a frown from Lady Helena stopped her, who pointed to the man in the corner, and whispered Julia, "I really believe that sleeping beauty has slumbered on during all the noise my coming in made; but see, he is roused now, I hope he will turn out amusing, or that we shall take in other passengers."

Lady Helena was nearly right. The man in the corner seemed to have slept through all the bustle; but now he rose from his reclining posture, and cast a scrutinizing glance around him. Lady Helena regarded him with a look equally observant; she saw that he evidently beheld Julia with admiration, but she was not satisfied with the less approving and bolder stare with which he regarded her; she was, however, disappointed, when, having satisfied his curiosity, he composed himself to sleep again in the corner.

"I cannot bear this," whispered Lady

Helena; if he goes thus all the way to town I shall have derived no fun from my expedition." Accordingly, she began to talk very loudly, and on various subjects; having desired Mrs. Spence, in a whisper, to call her Miss Brown, and the good woman delighted to be made a party in the secret of a noble lady, grinned compliance, and thought Lady Helena the sweetest, funniest, and most affable young lady in the world. But vainly and variously did Lady Helena talk, and Julia modestly and softly replied.

The man in the corner appeared to sleep on; this was too much for the irritable and impatient Lady Helena. Accordingly, with her usual rashness and indiscretion, having at first contented herself with exercising her whip in playfulness on Julia's and Mrs. Spence's petticoat; she slyly, and as if by chance let it fall, and with no light stroke on the ancle of the sleeper; but she blushed and shrunk back, full of too late regret and shame, when he started up—a blush of surprise mantling

on his cheek, and regarding her with a frown of dignified reproof. In a moment, however, his expression changed; an arch smile dimpled the corner of his mouth, which he turned away to conceal, and to Lady Helena's humbly expressed hope that she had not hurt him, and her request for pardon, he good-naturedly replied, " Never mind, I am not hurt, my dear, and I dare say you did not mean to hurt me."

The " my dear" smote rather harshly on the feelings of Lady Helena, and threw Julia so much off her guard that she darted a look of angry surprise at the speaker, but Lady Helena rebuked her with a frown, and considering this familiarity as the beginning of an amusing stage-coach incident, the grand object of her present ambition, she smoothed down the ruffled plumes of her pride, and prepared herself for what was to come next.

The appearance of their fellow passenger was certainly, hitherto, not much in his favor ; his coat was faded and a good

deal worn, and was cut quite short in the skirts; a large great coat was thrown across his knees, and he wore a coloured silk handkerchief round his neck, which came over his chin, and on his head was a welch wig, that even extended to his eye-brows, but the glance of his dark and deep-set eye was so bright and intelligent, so searching, and so sarcastic, that while still sitting back he surveyed his companions. Lady Helena, proud as she was, and conscious of her own consequence, felt relieved when it was directed towards her fellow-travellers. He then leaned back in the corner again, and seemed to cover his whole face with his pocket handkerchief, but it was no such thing, for Lady Helena soon discovered that he pulled it away from his eyes, and that those eyes were fixed on her; nor could she bear their scrutiny, yet why should she mind it. To be sure he was nobody; and as his portmanteau, or cloak bag, stood up before him, Lady Helena was convinced that he was nothing more than a rider, who travelled the country for

orders, like the son of her nurse-maid. The stranger seemed as if he read her thoughts, while she directed her eyes to his cloak bag, for he suddenly stretched himself in no respectful manner; then taking off his welch wig, as if resolved to dismiss sleep for the rest of the journey, he stroked down the rough luxuriance of his glossy black hair, adjusted his neck cloth, removed the coat from his well-turned limbs, and with a smile, which Lady Helena chose to think the true smirk of a tradesman, took his luggage on his lap, and asked the ladies if they understood French silks, for he could show them a fine specimen of them if they wished to order any.

"Pray do not trouble yourself, sir," said Julia, "I do not want any thing of the sort."

"Nor I," cried Lady Helena, "but I should like to see the goods nevertheless, and may want some one day or other."

"Yes, a white gros de Naples would be a pretty wedding dress," observed the

young man, leering up in her face, "and you would look so pretty in it!"

Julia again turned round and regarded him with indignation, while the frown of offended dignity gathered on the brow of Lady Helena; however, she recollected where she was, and she took no notice either of his allusion or his compliment. The stranger now displayed the pieces of silk; there were only three of them, one was of a pale blue, the other of pink, and the third of white.

"There," said the young man, "there are goods! not but what I think we can make as good in England now—but the order was given me, so I was forced to execute it: now tell me which do you like best?"

"The pink," said Lady Helena.

"Right,—it would suit your black hair the best; and this young lady would look best in the blue," replied he, looking at Julia with a sort of respectful inclination of the head. "This white one is for my bride that is to be, when I can find

one;" and, looking up in Lady Helena's face, with a very significant and presuming stare, "who knows but she may not be far off—chances and coaches have jumbled many folks together, that would otherwise never have met!"

Lady Helena's eye shrunk from his conceited and bold glance, but there was something so ludicrous to her in the easy impudence of the man's pretensions, and her own situation, that she could not retain her gravity: and her laughing seemed the signal of general laughter, for even Julia could not forbear; and Mrs. Spence, delighted with the consciousness of being in the secret, and full of the bustling importance which such a consciousness gives, bestowed on Lady Helena answering looks of great meaning; and, ending a sort of chucking laugh, with a 'well, for my part,' and a glance at the young tradesman, so full of self-consequence, that his mirth became the most incontrollable of any, and it was with difficulty that he composed himself suffi-

ciently, as he gazed on the good woman, to exclaim —" Well, good folks! you seem very merry at the idea of my espousal, but I promise you, my merry madam, that when I marry a certain person you shall have a wedding favor."

" Very well, and be sure you do not forget," cried Mrs. Spence, chuckling again.

But Lady Helena now began to grow as grave as Julia, and though pleased with having a real stage-coach adventure, for Mrs. Spence had whispered in her ear that she would certainly have an offer before she got to London, and that she had made a conquest, she could not but feel that it was not proper she should be the subject of such conversation and such jokes; nor was her vanity gratified, while her pride was wounded, for, in reality, both were severely mortified, as she could not but be conscious, that where there is no respect there is no real admiration, and that the stranger, when addressing Julia,

was a different man to what he was when addressing her; that his manner was respectful, his countenance modest, and that he became, in appearance, at least, a well-bred gentleman; yet there was nothing in Julia's manner, except its quietness, to mark her rank and situation; no conscious dignity, no loftiness of carriage, and she had both; therefore, why was she to be addressed with familiarity, degrading flattery, and saucy glances, while Julia was accosted with such marked and almost graceful respect? Lady Helena could not answer this question with satisfaction to her feelings, and she was provoked to find that she envied Julia the gratifying, because respectful admiration which this unknown man offered her; while she was lost in this painful reverie, Mrs. Spence pointed out a fine mansion to their notice, and mentioned some anecdotes relative to its noble possessor, one of which was, that she was so cruel to her daughter, and so jealous of her, that she would not allow

her to go out, though she was turned eighteen, and kept her in the nursery still.

"I dare say that is true," observed Lady Helena, "for I remember to have heard papa say that she was not presented as she ought to have been at the last drawing-room."

Here an audible though suppressed laugh burst from the stranger, and Lady Helena looked at him with frowning amazement; but, nothing daunted, he gazed steadily at her in return, with a sarcastic smile, and pointing to a fine girl in the road, said, "I know, without my papa's telling me, that that young creature, though I dare say she is eighteen, was not presented at the last drawing-room."

"You are rude, sir," cried Julia, provoked at this sneer at Lady Helena, who did not even attempt to reply.

"If you say so, madam," the young man answered with great deference and gentleness, "I am sure that I am so, and

I beg your friend's pardon; well, I see," he continued, resuming his familiar tone, "that I shall not get an order here—so I may as well put up my pieces, and not shew my patterns."

"Oh no, shew us your patterns, I beg; we should be very glad to serve you," said Lady Helena, with a *petit air de protection,* which became her stile of features and person, when she was in her right place, but which certainly seemed ill-timed where she was; and the person whom she addressed appeared to think so, for he replied with an arch tone and look—

"Indeed! aye, I see my fortune is made now; what think *you,* you comical soul?" addressing Mrs. Spence, who, in imitation of her superiors, now began to draw herself up, and look proud.

"No more a comical soul than yourself, sir; my name is Spence."

"Thank you for your information, Miss Spence!"

"No, sir,—mistress."

"Married, then! alas! I have no hopes,"

and he turned an eye, bursting with laughter, on Lady Helena, who, unable to resist the contagion of his mirth, as she saw Mrs. Spence's countenance beaming with ill-suppressed pleasure at the compliment, which she believed sincere, begged that he would no longer delay to shew her the patterns; but he sought for them in his trunk and his pockets in vain; and after expressing great distress at his loss, he added, "but, as I have escaped with life, all other losses are comparatively nothing."

"Escaped with life!" cried all his companions at once.

"Do tell us all about it," said Mrs. Spence.

"Yes, good folks," he replied, "you see before you a man who was nearly drowned only a few nights ago, through his own impatient folly; no packet was going to sail from Dieppe to Brighton, wind was contrary, and it blew a storm, but I could not wait."

"Not wait!"

"No; I had urgent business in England, and so I got some sailors to put off in a boat with me and my baggage;" here a sort of shuddering came over him, and he hid his face and paused, but soon continued thus:—"I cannot attempt to describe the danger and misery which succeeded; it unman's me to remember the lamentation of one of the poor men for his wife and children, when we thought death inevitable! and to think it was all my doing! my rashness!"—here he paused again, and looked out of the window—"however, blessed be Providence! we weathered the storm, and landed at Bognor, though I lost every thing but my cloak-bag; but I can scarcely forgive myself for having endangered so many lives!"

"And all for what? could any business be urgent enough to require such a risk," said Julia.

Lady Helena was silent and affected; she had watched the countenance of the

stranger as he spoke, and had been almost moved to tears by the depth of feeling which his voice and looks had displayed.

" I thought so then, at least," answered he; " I had a dear suffering friend in England, who conjured me to come to him in his distress, and so I came at all hazards."

" Well, I am glad you escaped," cried Lady Helena with great kindness, " and—and all the rest of you," she added, fearful she had spoken too kindly.

" I thank you," he replied, laying his hand on his heart, and darting at her one of his most scrutinizing glances.

" But how did you make your way hither?" said Lady Helena.

" By travelling on tops of coaches, or on foot, as I feared the news of my danger might travel before me else, and a false statement agonize one loving heart."

" Oh, there is then a loving heart?"

" Yes, but she is not to wear the white silk;" and as he spoke he winked his eye at Mrs. Spence; Lady Helena saw it, and

the charm was dispelled again; all interest in the narrative or the narrator vanished, and she heard with indifference, that the loving heart which he feared to alarm, was his mother's.

CHAP. VIII.

At this moment Julia, who had been looking out of the window, exclaimed,—"Oh! stop, stop, pray stop! the coach pray do! I am so frightened."

"Stop, stop!" cried Lady Helena, "but why?"

"Oh, because I am sure I saw papa's own man on the top of the coach standing at that door, and what may he not be coming to say?"

Lady Helena now called again, and so did Mrs. Spence and the stranger out of their window, but in vain, till Lady Helena finding herself disobeyed became quite angry and vociferated an "I command you to stop fellow!" in a manner that called forth a sarcastic smile on the lip of the stranger.

"Bravo," cried he, "one would think you had been used to play queen on the

stage." However the coachman did now deign to stop, and Julia insisted on getting out and running back to the coach to confirm or remove her fears. Lady Helena was going to accompany her, when Mrs. Spence prevented her, exclaiming, as she descended the step, "No, no, pray stay my lady, and let me go."

This disclosure of her rank so utterly confounded Lady Helena, that she reseated herself, unable to make even an effort to follow her; she was able, however, to cast an anxious look at the stranger, to see whether he heard what Mrs. Spence said, and she thought she observed an expression of surprise on his countenance.

"Ridiculous!" cried she, to call me my lady, as if I were a lady!"

"Ridiculous indeed!" he coolly replied, "laughing; no, no, you are no lady I know."

"Do you, indeed!" said Lady Helena changing colour—"and pray how do you know that?"

He did not speak, but looking at her with a most provoking archness, and sauci-

ness of expression, he rubbed the ankle which she had hit with her whip. Lady Helena felt, and could not bear the severity of the reproof.

"He was sure she was no lady," he said, "and he had thus shewn her why he thought so!"

Shame and conscious degradation dyed her cheek in blushes, and tears of a most painful nature forced themselves into her eyes. To be thus reproved by an inferior! it was insupportable! but she had deserved it, and that was more painful still; however, she trusted he did not see the pain he had inflicted, for she thrust her head out of the window to look for Julia's return. She was not long absent, and she came back with a smiling countenance, exclaiming—"It was not the man I thought it was, and I am so glad, but indeed I was terribly alarmed."

"Dearest girl!" cried Lady Helena, with a mournful tenderness, as Julia reseated herself—"I am happy indeed that you have no new cause of unhappiness!"

The smile of Julia was now instantly

over-clouded, and she burst into tears, while Lady Helena's tears flowed unrestrained down her cheeks, as she gazed on her weeping companion. At this moment she suddenly looked round and beheld the stranger looking at her with an expression, and the only unequivocal expression of approbation and admiration which she had yet seen on his face, while he was gazing at her, and she was angry with herself for being so gratified at beholding it. It was, however, transitory, for he suddenly sighed deeply, and looked out of the window, as if he thought his earnest gaze at such a moment obtrusive. But he soon resumed his easy familiarity, and began to talk of his travels; nor was it long before he completely rivetted the attention of his auditors as he talked to them in his own way, as he said, that is of the silk manufactory at Lyons; and he described the process of making their silk, which he had carefully observed, and also that in Spitalfields. This conversation amused and interested Julia, whose well-constituted mind was

ever willing to turn from contemplating its trials, and she observed, that a friend of her's had often said information and instruction are to be obtained any where and every where, if one is able and willing to seek for and to receive it. Still, little did I think I should learn so much in a stage coach.

" And why not in a stage coach—did you never ride in a stage coach before ?"

" Oh, no never," cried Lady Helena, eagerly—" and we shall never, never ride in one again !"

The stranger now gave way to violent laughter, which he endeavoured to hide by covering his face with his handkerchief. Lady Helena and Julia did not deign to notice this rudeness, but Mrs. Spence, conscious of the rank of the ladies, could not let it pass unnoticed, but declared, she saw nothing to laugh at in what the young lady had said, and it was all true ; she was sure she would never ride in a stage-coach again, and no wonder when she met such

uncivil treatment in it from nobody knew who.

"My good lady," replied the stranger, "all ladies who travel thus, are 'nobody knows who,' to their companions, till they have by broad hints of their consequence, and especially by their animated expression of dislike to travel in so vulgar a vehicle, which they never did before, and never will do again, convincing each other that they are somebody! though still in reality they may remain 'nobody knows who,'—for few persons are as generous as yourself, and tell their names: you, I remember, told me your name was Spence, and alas! death to my hopes! you also added mistress to it." The manner in which he said this was so comically pathetic, that the friends forgot their anger awhile, and could not help smiling;—but Mrs. Spence was still more offended, as she saw he was laughing at her, and she angrily cried—

"None of your flings, young man!

either at me or these young ladies—'nobody knows who!' indeed!"

"No, no, young woman, somebody! I own them now to be somebody! for you know they never travelled thus before, and never will again." These last words he spoke exactly in Lady Helena's tone and manner, and still more offended at his presumption, she haughily threw back her head, darted at him an indignant look, and folding her arms, leaned back in the corner of the coach, as if resolved to preserve a strict silence in future.

"One of the somebodies is affronted I fear," said the stranger in a loud whisper to Mrs. Spence—"I am sorry for it—but we are all equals in a stage-coach you know, and I loves my joke, and must have it even if your friends be dutchesses in disguise; and they may be, for as I am unused to be in such grand company, I should not find them out."

"Dutchesses! no not dutchesses! but ——," here she grinned with excessive meaning, and looked as if she could no

longer conceal the secret of the rank of her companions.

"Oh! I know I have discovered something," whispered he again.

"What! what have you discovered?" "That you are— a countess and the mother of that sullen young lady in the corner."

"A countess! I a countess! well, for my part!—there's a compliment," cried the delighted Mrs. Spence, thrusting her elbow against Lady Helena to make her notice what passed, and forgetting her usual respectful distance. But Lady Helena was not in a humour to relish the familiarity, and shrinking from her touch, she proudly said—"Your elbow is rather sharp Mrs. Spence, I desire not to feel it again."

As Lady Helena said this, her eye met that of the stranger,—and strange to say, she beheld in his an expression of disapprobation of her pride and her petulance, which not only made her repent what she had said, but even influenced her to repair her fault, especially, as she saw that the

poor woman writhed under the reproof. With her sweetest smile therefore, and her kindest tone, she took hold of the good woman's arm, and playfully passing her hand over her elbow, she said—"My dear Mrs. Spence, you seem so good-natured, that I wonder your elbow is so sharp, for none but scolds, they say, have sharp elbows; yours, therefore, belie you very much—do they not my dear cousin?'

"Yes, that they do," replied Julia, "for Mrs. Spence is remarkably kind and good-tempered."

"Oh, dear ladies, you make me blush!" cried Mrs. Spence, confused as much by Lady Helena's courtesy as she had before been by her severity; but the pleasure excited by the one, was easier to be borne than the pain to be inflicted by the other, and as the confusion soon went off, her delight expressed itself in sundry." "Oh, dears! and you are very good," uttered with blushing volubility.

Lady Helena, now pleased with herself, ventured to look at the stranger, but his

eyes were averted, and he was humming a tune out of the window. Lady Helena was mortified, she thought she had deserved a look of approbation now, but he had not given it, and she was hurt, and wherefore? why should she care for the reproof or approbation of a person like that? Lady Helena was really ashamed of her weakness, and could not but own to herself that her vanity was far greater than her pride; for if she had more pride than vanity, this man's opinion of her must have been a matter of indifference. The coach now stopped at an inn, and the travellers were asked to alight—but the ladies preferred remaining where they were, and partaking of the contents of Mrs. Spence's basket. The stranger, however, chose to alight, and while he was in the house Lady Helena desired Mrs. Spence to call the coachman and ask the name and the condition of their fellow-travellers, but he was ignorant of both; he believed, however, he was well known on the road, and was a rider from London,—but he would enquire

more of a young woman whom he brought with him, and who was on the top of the coach. Here Lady Helena exchanged a significant glance with Julia, and an indignant blush overspread her cheek, when she thought that their companion united loose morals, perhaps to impertinent familiarity. But such a suspicion never occurred to the less interested Julia; and when the coachman returned, she felt neither pleasure nor surprize at learning that the young woman was a poor sick girl on crutches on her way to London, to consult a celebrated surgeon, who was to give her advice gratis; and unable to pay the expense of a coach thither, that as the coachmen informed Lady Helena the stranger had overtaken her on the road, and assisted her along, had paid for a place for her beside the coachman, as she could not bear to go inside, and had given her money besides; and when I asked her his name, said the coachmen, "the poor thing, said, "His name? Angel, I believe, for he has acted like one to me; but I never saw

him before, though I have reason to bless him as long as I live."

Julia and Mrs. Spence listened to this favourable account of their companion, with smiles of undissembled delight, and declared they should look at him when he came in again, with much pleasure.

But Lady Helena said nothing; she was provoked to acknowledge to herself how much this low, saucy, and familiar person had interested her, and this evidence at once of his worthiness and of his situation in life, together with the consciousness that she had made an unfavourable impression on him, filled her with feelings which she could not have defined, but which it was painful to endure. While this was passing in her mind, the stranger came out, and looking up at the poor woman on the box with a smile of the utmost benevolence, he said something to her; then, seeing that he was observed, he turned away, and walked backwards and forwards before the coach. He had now taken off his silk handkerchief, ad-

justed his black silk cravat, and had concealed his short coat, which had suffered so much from wind and weather, by his great coat; and as he walked rapidly along, Julia and Mrs. Spence declared they had never seen a finer or handsomer man. Lady Helena was of their opinion, but ye—es, uttered slowly and brokenly, was all she chose to say, and Julia chided her for her reluctance, to do the young man justice.

At length, with cheeks glowing with the exercise he had taken, and with the chilly October breeze, he re-entered the carriage, and as soon as he was re-seated he resumed the air and manner so offensive to the dignity of Lady Helena. "So you would not come out and mess with us?" said he to Mrs. Spence. "Painful pre-eminence!"

"Oh, my dear countess, you know not what you lost—such a fine round of cold beef—plenty of pickled onions too, but I would not eat any," as smirking in Mrs.

Spence's face, "I did not know what might take place before we parted."

"Impudence!" cried Mrs. Spence, at once pleased and offended.

"Impudence!—I have said nothing to deserve so harsh a term," said he; "you must have given my words an improper meaning. If we should be overturned, and you fall into my arms, it would be doubly hard for you to run the risk of breaking your limbs, and being poisoned too; there was nothing impudent in that —was there?"

"Dear me, no!—but I thought you meant—"

"There, there," said Lady Helena, impatiently and proudly; "it is not necessary you should explain what you thought."

"No, to be sure," observed the simpering Mrs. Spence; "but do you really think there is any likelihood of our being overturned?—if there be, what would become of the poor lame girl by the coachman?" smiling in his face, as she spoke.

"Poor thing!" replied he; "but how did you know there was such a person there?"

"Oh, we know all about it," said Julia, looking at him, with approving kindness.

"You do!—oh the curiosity of women! I see you have been making enquiries."

"Yes, to be sure we have," cried Mrs. Spence, turning towards Lady Helena, whose cheeks glowed with blushes.

"Well, ladies, I hope your curiosity was satisfied?"

"At least your vanity ought to be, for we heard high praises of your good-nature and generosity," answered Mrs. Spence.

"Pshaw!—what a sarcasm it is on human nature that the most ordinary piece of humanity, and the performance of even the most unavoidable duty should be thought worthy of notice and praise. If I were a writer instead of a tradesman, I would write a book against the pernicious custom of lauding a man for any

kind action, especially one which he could not help performing, till there is danger of his vanity going hand in hand with his benevolence, or being the only prompter to his good deeds in future. That smile, which I have just received from that corner," looking at Julia, "and the encouraging and laudatory nod from you, my *vis-â-vis*, are enough to make me vain for life; and I am happy that their power is counteracted by the cold silence and almost frowning brow of the young lady in the other corner."

Lady Helena was about to reply, when the coach stopped to change horses, and Julia, looking out of the window, exclaimed, in a tone of vexation, "Oh, there is Mr. Mansfeldt, and he sees me."

"Mansfeldt!" cried Lady Helena, turning pale.

"Mansfeldt!" cried the stranger; and in another moment they heard him in his hypocritical tone, approaching the door, and exclaiming—"What! the Julia here! oh! all ye gods, is it possible!" On

which Lady Helena pushed Mrs. Spence to the window, that her head and Julia's, united, might prevent his looking into the coach; then throwing herself back in the corner opposite the stranger, she put a shawl over part of her face, and waited, in trembling anxiety, the result of the ensuing conference; but from beneath the shawl she could observe the stranger, who seemed eager as herself not to be seen by Mansfeldt, and was listening as attentively to the conversation.

"If you are going to London, or whithersoever you are going, I shall go with you, to protect your bright excellence," said Mansfeldt.

"Sir, I am sufficiently protected."

"Oh, no! more than one flaming cherub guarded the gates of paradise; I must come in:—Coachy, open the door!"

"Pray, Mr. Coachman, do not," vociferated Julia.

"There is no room, sir," screamed Mrs. Spence.

"The coach holds six!" screamed Mansfeldt in return, imitating her voice.

"Impudent rascal!" muttered the stranger; "but the coachman dares not let him in, after what I said."

"Oh, what shall I do?" murmured Lady Helena, encouraged by the stranger's manner, though she scarcely knew why, and looking imploringly in his face, while Mansfeldt's mean and vindictive mind led him to be the more determined on coming in, because he saw that his entrance would displease Julia, and leading the coachman aside, he said to her, "I will soon bring him to terms, believe me, and the coach holds six."

"Oh, do you hear him?" cried Julia to Lady Helena; "and see! I do believe the man is giving way."

"What shall I do?—his very sight is poison to me, now," cried Lady Helena, in the greatest agitation, "and to be seen by him here!"

"He shall not come hither, I assure

you," cried the stranger; "I will take care to prevent that;" so saying he jumped out, and Mrs. Spence following him, with her eyes, exclaimed—"There, he has taken him by the arm, and how the fellow started at seeing him; and, there he has led him away yonder; and how he looks at him, as if he would eat him alive. Oh, he is a fine young man, and his eyes look as fierce and bright as live coals; and now he has let him go, but with such a fling, I thought the fellow would have fallen; but he is not coming back with him—no not he!" The stranger was in the coach in another moment, the driver on the box, and the ladies relieved from their fears.

"And we are off, and freed from his odious presence," cried Lady Helena, clasping her hands in joy; "a thousand thanks to you."

"But how did you manage that unmanageable man?" said Julia.

"Oh, easily enough; I knew he would not persist when he saw me, and heard what I had to say."

"He knows you, then?"

"Yes; I know him, and I have told him that I do so; nor will he soon venture to cross my path again."

"Well; I cannot think how you could gain such power over him!"

"You forget that Mansfeldt is said to be deep in his tradesmen's debt, and that there are such things as writs and bailiffs."

"Oh, dear, I had forgotten you were a tradesman," said Lady Helena, blushing.

"And I had almost forgotten it myself," he replied, smiling and blushing also; "the sight of that fellow, and certain looks and tones put a lion's heart in me, and a knight errant's daring."

"But how strange it was," cried Julia, "for Mr. Mansfeldt to want to come in to protect me, as he said."

"He protect you!—the wolf so protects the lamb."

"Insolent ruffian! but I told him I wanted no protection."

"Nor would you, except from a wretch

like him; your modest dignity, your purity, and propriety of manner would be always sufficient protection to you in the eyes of a rightly feeling man: you might go over the world in safety, a Una without her lion. Good heavens! to think that there exists a man, who could have the heart to wound and injure a creature like that." As he uttered this rhapsody to the astonished and blushing Julia, he fixed his eyes on her with an expression of tender pity, and a gaze as fixed as it was affectionate; then heaving a deep sigh, he begged her pardon for the liberty he had taken in speaking as he had done, but that she was so like a lady whom Mansfeldt had used ill, that he fancied he was speaking to her.

This apology a little comforted Lady Helena, who was now nearly convinced that the unknown was much superior to his apparent rank in life, and, spite of her better judgment, was envious of his evident preference of Julia, or rather of the superior respect which he seemed to en-

tertain for her, and who feared that he, in his high-blown speech, meant to contrast Julia's propriety with her own impropriety of conduct."

"However ill Mr. Mansfeldt might behave to your friend, sir," said Julia, "I am not conscious of his ever having used me ill, except as far as teazing me, and saying rude things to me, was using me ill."

"No!—and did you never say any thing severe to him?"

"Oh, yes, very—I must own that."

"And can you suppose he ever forgave it?—depend on it he never did; and that he hates you cordially, and would injure you to the utmost of his power."

"How well you know him, and how right you are?" cried Lady Helena, significantly.

"And how well *you* know him," replied the stranger, with an arch smile, "else you would not have been so afraid of being seen by him in a stage-coach. Aye, poor thing! all your hopes of future distinction from him would have been at an end;

no more dancing with him at an election-ball, even though your father carried twenty votes to the candidate, whom Mansfeldt deigned to patronize. I say at an election-ball, for ladies who travel in public coaches cannot, I apprehend, meet Mansfeldt at any other description of ball, even though they proudly boast of being sufficiently protected."

"My friend, there," replied Lady Helena, proudly, "has a footman, on the top of the coach, to protect her, sir."

"But could he have prevented that vile man from coming in?—now do deign to own, that but for me he would have been here."

"I do own it, and with deep thankfulness, and for the sake of your affectionate kindness forgive all your—your—"

"Impertinence, you would say, I believe, and I thank you for your pardon, however ungraciously worded; but what is the hour?— I expect to be met before we reach London. I am going to dine with my mamma; as to day is Saturday, there is

no opening shop to-morrow, I shall, therefore, partake of her Sunday dinner—toad in a hole, and plumb-pudding."

"And a very good dinner too," cried Mrs. Spence; "and I should not care if I was going to eat it with you."

"Well, what say you, will you go?—my vehicle will hold two; but I forgot, you must stay where you are, to protect these young ladies."

"To protect me you mean," said Lady Helena, in a tone of pique; "my friend, you know, needs no protection but her own."

"True," he replied, "she is not likely to provoke warfare from any one but a Mansfeldt; if she had a whip in her hand, she would be careful not to let it strike *à tort et à travers;* and then her eyes are not eyes to hold inquisitive parley with those of a stranger"—fixing his own on Mrs. Spence as he spoke, as if he only meant to point her out as the object of his sarcasm—"yes, indeed, a young lady like that is to be trusted alone any where, however

unbecoming her the situation in which the fault of others has placed her:—securely she smiles on the forward and bold." Here he paused and looked at Lady Helena, who, in spite of her pride, in spite of her conviction hitherto, that it was an inferior who addressed her, was now convinced she had been mistaken, and felt almost awed by the soundness of his remarks on Julia, and by the wise severity of the reproof, which she could not but feel was directed at herself; she listened, therefore, with downcast eyes, and a burning cheek, unable to rally under his oppressive glance; she then took off her hat, and busied herself in adjusting her hair, in order to escape from the awkwardness of her feelings. Julia, surprised and flattered, was silent, from an indistinct consciousness that there was a meaning in the stranger's words which implied censure on her friend, while it complimented her, and also from a strong but vain wish to say something in her defence. He, meanwhile, had folded his arms, and was gazing

on the subdued and humbled Lady Helena, with evident admiration, and as if absorbed in contemplation of her:—"And yet," said he, bursting from his reverie, "though one admires and reverences the woman whom her own qualities protect, still it is most delightful to bestow protection on a trembling female, especially when the beautiful bully, turned into a confessed and conscious coward, requires to be assisted, and looks up beseechingly in one's face; such a moment as that in a man's life is worth a million, even though it may cost him the peace of the remainder of it." At these words, uttered in a tone softened almost to tenderness, Lady Helena ventured to look up, almost doubting the evidence of her ears; but she looked down again, when she saw the admiring expression with which the strange person was regarding her; nor did she look up again till she saw he was looking out of the window, and heard him exclaim, "I wonder where my vehicle is!—we are within twenty miles of London."

At this moment Mrs. Spence cried out, "Dear me, what a handsome carriage, with two servants in fine liveries, is standing at the bottom of that lane!"

"Indeed!" said the stranger, "but, my good lady, do you see an ordinary looking gig also, just big enough to hold your humble servant and one other person?"

"No, not yet!"

"Well, well, I shall see my vehicle soon, I dare say; so I may as well stop here."

Accordingly, while Mrs. Spence expressed her sorrow at losing such a funny companion, he called to the coachman to stop; then bowing gracefully and respectfully to Julia, and nodding adieu to Mrs. Spence, he suddenly seized the ungloved hand of Lady Helena, and while she angrily struggled to withdraw it, he pressed it to his lips, and jumped out of the coach; he then gave money to the coachman and throwing his cloak-bag over his shoulder,

ran out of sight in an instant. Lady Helena almost sobbing with mortification, and offended pride, could not help venting her feelings in exclamations of insolent, presumptious creature! to bow so respectfully to you Julia, and to take such a liberty with me! what could he mean by it? altogether his behaviour was most extraordinary, and really, Julia, much as I love you, I cannot see why you should be so much extolled above me, and be taken for such a superior person, while I was not allowed to look like a lady at all.

"Nor I neither, I am sure, dear Lady Helena;—and he could not be a man of any penetration," Julia replied with great simplicity."

"Dear, candid, generous girl!" cried Lady Helena,—"but you are—you are my superior, and the man's penetration is admirable;—but, oh, that ever I should have exposed myself to the mortifications and alarms of this day!"

"Oh! my patience!" now screamed

out Mrs. Spence, " there he goes! as sure as life! and that fine carriage was his, and he is a great man."

" Are you mad?" cried Lady Helena, changing colour, and following the direction of Mrs. Spence's eyes, " and of whose are you talking!" She said no more—she saw a gentleman who looked like the stranger driving himself in a most elegant phaeton, two servants in splendid liveries, following him on horseback. Still Lady Helena could not, would not believe the evidence of her own eyes, because she dared not believe it—as she thought she saw a coronet on the carriage, and dreaded lest the stranger should turn out to be the being whom she most wished to behold, and whom she most wished should see her to the greatest advantage. It was therefore with agony that she grasped the hand of Julia, exclaiming,

" Oh! if it should be so, if it should be he, I am a wretch indeed! but we shall soon pass him again, he is stopping while the servant adjusts the harness:—oh!

'tis he, he has taken off his hat; yes, yes 'tis his fine profile, I shall go distracted! oh! it is evident that he knew me all the time by my likeness to Marcus, and wished to mark his disapprobation;—but we are passing him,—I will sit back: yes, yes, it is a viscount's coronet, and I know the motto!"

Julia wondering, and speechless at Lady Helena's mysterious words, now turned to the window to convince herself of the identity of the stranger with the driver of the phaeton, and to salute him as he passed; but he did not look off the reins which he had now resumed, and was adjusting; however, she saw that beyond dispute the stranger and the driver were one.

"Did he not deign to look in?" cried Lady Helena."

"Deign! no not once; but, do pray tell me who this person is, that agitates you thus, my dearest friend? surely, surely it is not Lord Restormel!"

"It is, it is; and I am so miserable! so very miserable!" Here she gave way to a

violent burst of tears, unrestrained even by the presence of Mrs. Spence; nor could Julia say any thing to console her, though she felt the most sincere desire to do so, as she remembered his character, for even fastidious delicacy in his ideas of the conduct of woman; and could now only too well understand the pointed manner in which he had praised her, evidently meaning at the same to reprove her friend.

Julia was now certain that he had been awake when Lady Helena entered the carriage, and had known her from her likeness to her brother, and from other circumstances, and had guessed who she herself was.

The effect his presence and interference had over Mansfeldt was now explained, and Julia's kind heart bled for Lady Helena's distress, because she had often heard her declare her wish to charm Lord Restormel, and she could not but fear that his rigid judgment would be up in arms against her, from the circumstances in which he had just beheld her.

Still Julia remembered with pleasure that he was Lord Restormel, and knew the real rank of the party; the familiarity, and even the rudeness of which Lady Helena complained, lost much of their offensiveness; for it was evident that he so presumed, in order to shew her the disagreeable consequences of the situation in which she had placed herself; she also recalled, with joy, what he had said concerning the pleasure of protecting 'a beautiful bully,' when turned into a 'confessed coward;' and the looks still more tender and flattering than the words which accompanied what he said. Nor could Julia be easy till she had tried to impart to Lady Helena the comfort she had herself received from these recollections; but she communicated them in vain. To be made acquainted with Lord Restormel, whom she had learned to consider as the noblest of human beings; to conduct herself so as to ensure his esteem, and make esteem the ground work of a warmer passion, had long been the darling object of her hopes

and her desires; nor, while meditating on the conquest of his valuable heart, had she any intention of withholding her own; on the contrary, her own might be said to be prepared for an instant surrender as soon as the conqueror should be disposed to demand it. To him, and to him alone, she used to imagine that the sacrifice of her bad habits, and of her own will, would be sweet and salutary; and she never thought of her introduction to Lord Restormel without a resolution to model her thoughts, her looks, and her actions, according to his ideas of feminine propriety. But now that meeting, so long desired and so long unexpectedly delayed, had taken place, in a situation in which she ought not to have been seen, and which an unbecoming disregard of the niceties of filial duty had prompted her to seek. She had conducted herself in it with a disregard of decorum that had called forth the disapprobation of that man, whose approval she had taught herself to believe necessary to her happiness, and if it were

indeed possible that Lord Restormel had beheld her with eyes of personal admiration, she well knew from the account she had heard of his self-command, and the power of his judgment over his feelings, that he would not allow his heart to yield to an attachment which his understanding disapproved. In the meanwhile, what was the effect of this interview on her? He had excited in her even an uncontrollable interest, when she believed him to be in an inferior station of life, by the uncommon graces of his person, the remarkable variety and expression of his countenance, and the traits of just thinking, of fearless benevolence, and energy of character, which circumstances had elicited, an interest of which she was ashamed, but yet found it impossible to control; and now that she discovered, in this bold reprover, the very man she most wished to behold and to please, and felt that in all probability she had now lost him for ever, a sorrow, as romantic as her attachment, took possession of her soul, and unused to govern her sensi-

bility, she wept in uncontrollable anguish on the shoulder of Julia. The well meaning Mrs. Spence was at first awed into silence by the sight of a distress which was so violent, and to her so incomprehensible; but at last she took courage, and said by way of consolation, "If Lady Helena had taken a fancy to the young man, surely she ought to be glad to find that his rank was equal to her own; and if he liked her the worse for a bit of fun, such as riding in a stage-coach for once, he must be a cross patch, and he was not worth thinking about at all;—but she was very sure that was not the case, and that he was ready to devour her with his eyes."

To the former part of this speech, whose officious daring she would in a happier moment have haughtily reproved, Lady Helena listened without interest, and with little attention; but she now eagerly started up, and desired to know what Mrs. Spence meant by devouring her with his eyes.

"Oh, that when your ladyship did not look at him, he looked at you, with such

looks, I cannot exactly say how, but as if he thought you very handsome, and did not know how to take his eyes off you."

"Can I believe this, Julia," said Lady Helena, smiling, through her tears, "after all the marked homage to you, and his countenance while gazing on you?"

"If this gentleman be, indeed, Lord Restormel," replied Julia, blushing deeply, and with a faltering voice, "the strange and strong interest he seemed to take in me is only too well accounted for; pity often looks like love they say, and if he knows all, no doubt he pities me."

"True, true, if he knows all; but who should tell him?—not Marcus; but I remember that papa wrote to him after that sad rencontre."

"Did he; however, even if he does know all, I am sure, by his manner, that he does not despise me, and I can bear it."

"Despise you!—no, Julia, no!—would to heaven I were as sure that he does not despise me."

"Dear, my lady, how you talk; how

could any young gentleman despise you? and as to him, poor dear, I am more afraid he should love you too well, and break his heart if you do not love him too."

Lady Helena was now sufficiently herself again, to feel, that degraded as she was in her own eyes before, she was sinking still lower by the indelicate publicity which she was giving to her fears and her mortifications in the presence of such a witness; and shrinking alike from her wonder and her soothings, she coldly said, that she was afraid the gentleman would tell her brother where he had met her, and that he would be very angry with her; she then declared her resolution of banishing him and his impertinence from her mind.

"No, no," cried Julia, eagerly, "I am sure, quite sure, he will not tell—tell *him*."

"And why so?"

"Oh, because—because—oh, because it is not likely he should betray you to any one."

"I see what you mean, but are too

generous to utter, Julia; you mean that he is too kind to expose me."

Julia did not reply, and as Lady Helena threw herself back in her seat to meditate on what had passed, Julia's last words added bitterness to her contemplations, for even Julia felt that to mention having met her would be to expose her. She did not long remain quiet, but starting up, she begged that Mrs. Spence would call the coachman, who was then off the box, to ask him if he knew who their fellow-traveller was? The coachman replied, that he only knew he was as generous as a prince, but he believed he was only a lord. "I suspected," said he, "he must be a great man, by the way in which he looked and talked to that queer chap that wanted to come in, but I would not have let him. Why, bless your heart, the gentleman when he first got out paid me the fare of the other two places inside, and told me he would on no account suffer the ladies already in to be incommodated by another passenger."

"Well now, really that was quite genteel, indeed," cried Mrs. Spence, as she sat down again. "Did not choose us ladies to be incommoded."

"Oh, he is a charming man."

Julia said it was very kind, but Lady Helena said nothing; she felt it to be another proof how much Lord Restormel disapproved of what he saw, and she spoke no more during the journey.

At the inn, to their joyful surprise, they found Sir George Villeroy's carriage and servants waiting for them. And had the coach not arrived as soon as it was expected, the servants had orders to add leaders to the carriage, and go to meet their young lady; for when Sir George heard how his daughter was to return, he positively denied having given the consent which had been surprised from him when he was nearly asleep, and had sent off the chariot with the above-mentioned order. But Lady Helena, however, desired her father's servant to accompany her, as she

was not sure she should be received by her friends, and should not require his attendance.

As Mrs. Seebright's house was in the way to Gloucester Place, Lady Helena desired to be driven thither immediately. Before they drove off Lady Helena was excessively annoyed by the very natural vanity of Mrs. Spence, who was met by the friends she came to visit, and who, eager to shew she had had a lady of quality for a travelling companion, wished her ladyship good evening, in an audible voice, as soon as she had hoped Miss Villeroy would find Sir George and Lady Villeroy well, adding, with an arch smile, and a significant nod, to shew the familiar terms on which she was with an earl's daughter—"I think, my lady, you will not soon forget your journey in a stage-coach, your ladyship."

"No; I shall never, never forget it, indeed," exclaimed Lady Helena, as the carriage drove off, after she had bowed in proud silence to the grinning Mrs. Spence. I have heard it said," continued Lady

Helena, "that it is not the situation in which one is, but one's conduct in it, that can disgrace one; I was, through my own folly, in a vehicle where I should not have placed myself; but it was my trumpery egotism, my restless desire for notice and adventures, that caused my situation to disgrace me. Had I been contented to remain quiet and unobtrusive as you did, Julia—had I been easy to sit still like a modest gentlewoman, without making so improper an effort to rouze the attention of my fellow-traveller, even he, with his rigid ideas, could not have been displeased with my behaviour, but might have admired me as he did you."

"But after all you did nothing so very offensive, and he must have thought that you did not mean to touch him with your whip."

"Indeed he thought quite the contrary, he was certain the touch was intentional."

"But it will be easy to assure him that it was not."

"No, Julia, no—not at the expense of truth."

"How! did you really mean to give him a stroke with your whip?"

"I did; nay Julia, pray do not look so horror struck! I did, but I can no more deny than I can defend my conduct; and were it to make Lord Restormel abhor me for life, were he to say, 'to be sure you struck me by accident,' I should reply, no, it was by design."

"That I am sure you would! But how glad I am, Miss Brightwen was not present! she would have been so vexed!"

"And I am so sorry she was not! for had she been there, her reproving eye, or rather that eye looking at me, 'more in sorrow than in anger,' would have kept me in order even by the wish of not afflicting her. Julia, happy girl! had Miss Brightwen been my governess I might have been like you, and Lord Restormel might have approved instead of scorning me."

"Do not talk of his scorning you—I am sure he admires you in spite of——"

"Yes, in spite of his judgment; but I will see if I cannot bend that haughty judgment before the throne of love, and if

I can but subdue that arrogant and rebellious heart, why then—"

"Then what!"

"I cannot exactly tell," replied Lady Helena, (many rebellious, contending, and proud feelings passing in rapid succession over her beautiful face, not one of which was understood by Julia), and their conversation was interrupted by their arrival at Mrs. Seebright's door, at which stood a female servant, then the only inhabitant of the mansion, for the family had left town suddenly only the day before, as Mrs. Seebright had been ordered to Cheltenham by her physician at a few hours notice. This put the finishing stroke to poor Lady Helena's vexation, as she found herself under the necessity of taking possession of her friend's empty house, or of forcing herself on a woman whom she disliked and despised, an unexpected and unwelcome guest. She could not however hesitate to comply with Julia's earnest request, that she would accompany her to Gloucester Place, where from her father at least, however unwell

he might be, she was certain of a warm reception.

"At all events," replied the humbled Lady Helena, "I can return home to-morrow, or the next day, when I expect my own maid; I desired her to follow me; and I can keep the footman in town, therefore I can return in a more proper way than I came; and as for the little mortifications I may meet with from your maratre, Julia, I have deserved them all by my foolish exploit, and must bear them with all due meekness: however, I hope to grow wiser from this experience, and to remember that it is impossible to calculate on the consequences of one wrong or foolish action."

"How often I have heard Miss Brightwen say that," exclaimed Julia!" oh! how I shall miss her in Gloucester Place; but here we are, and I declare there is dear papa at the window."

END OF VOL. I.

T. White, Printer, Johnson's Court, London.

MUCH TO BLAME.

CHAPTER IX.

I SHALL now go back to Lord Restormel. This young nobleman having lost his father at a very early age, was educated by his mother, a high born, proud, but pious, virtuous, intellectual woman;—her pride, however great, led in her to excellent results, for she thought it incumbent on those whom it had pleased their Creator to elevate in station above their fellow-men, not to disgrace that exalted station by vice or ignorance; she laboured, therefore, to ensure to her elder son, who was entrusted to her care, the utmost purity of morals, by giving him the soundest principles of religion, the best and surest foundation for outward conduct, and at the same time she

caused his rare talents to be cultivated to the utmost, by masters judiciously chosen for that purpose. The seed thus sown fell not on stony ground, but sprung up to a plentiful harvest; and while her younger son, who had been adopted by a weak and profligate uncle, became notorious for his idleness and his vices, Lord Restormel was the pride of his preceptors, the happiness of his mother, and the blessing of his neighbourhood. His brother meanwhile, regardless as such a man was likely to be of the principles and manners of the woman he married, chose for his wife the beautiful and notoriously indiscreet daughter of a beautiful and notoriously frail mother, who soon forsook him for another man, and before the passion was over which her loveliness had excited. The consequence was, that not contented with the usual reparation afforded him by the law, he took revenge into his own hands, followed the offending parties abroad, and forced his rival to meet him in a duel; the result of which was fatal to himself only, and Lady Res-

tormel mourned over him as the victim not only of his own rashness and ungovernable passions, but also of the error of his choice in marriage. Deeply, therefore, did she endeavour to impress on the mind of her only surviving child the necessity of preferring to every other charm or quality in woman, sound principles of piety and virtue, exhibiting themselves in a strict outward attention to the dictates of decorum, and a quiet sobriety of manner, which seemed to avoid rather than to court observation; and while she exhibited in her own person and conduct a model of feminine propriety and graceful dignity, which at once gratified the taste, and satisfied the judgment of Lord Restormel; he could with a safe conscience assure his mother that he believed himself incapable of selecting a woman for his wife, who did not in all essentials at least resemble her;—nor had his heart rebelled against his judgment, or suffered itself to be impressed at all by the witchery of female loveliness, when during his travels abroad he became intimately

acquainted with Captain Fortescue, and heard him descant on the charms, the talents, and the character of Lady Helena. Fortescue was not blind to the defects of his sister, or the rigid ideas of his friend on the subject of female conduct; still he could not help owning to Lord Restormel his earnest desire to introduce him to his sister, and to see him united to her, accompanied by an assurance, that a nature, generous and impressible as her's was, would be easily moulded to the pleasure and opinions of a husband; and that Lady Helena, if her heart was once his, could soon be fashioned into all that he approved.

"But suppose that, on being introduced to her, I should lose my heart in defiance of my judgment, and not be able to obtain her's in return?"

"But that is an impossible supposition —you must charm any woman whom you wish to charm."

"I thank you for your flattery, but it cannot overcome my caution; I would

rather not know Lady Helena Fortescue, as I am very sure that, admirable as she is, she would not satisfy my mother's judgment, though she might hoodwink mine—and I never will marry to give pain to the parent to whom I owe so much."

Fortescue was mortified, and pride forbade him to renew the subject; but he continued to shew his friend Lady Helena's letters, and Lord Restormel soon became interested in the arrival of the post from England, for whatever she herself might be, Lady Helena's letters were all the heart and the mind could desire, and displayed a precocity of intellect, a shrewdness of observation, and a playful wit, which made her a desirable correspondent to any one. This conviction of her powers, however, made him more resolved against accompanying his friend to Laurel Grove, especially as Lady Restormel had said—

"What a strange, forward, eccentric, self-willed girl is that Lady Helena Fortescue; her weak grand-mother, Lady Stanmore, with whom she has always

lived has quite ruined her; I never saw her, indeed, but from what I hear of her, I would not on any account renew my early acquaintance with her mother."

Lord Restormel made no reply, though he earnestly wished to say something in palliation of this harsh censure, and to hint that a girl of extraordinary talents might excite envy, and be liable to misrepresentation; but he knew his mother would observe that she hated extraordinary talents in woman, and he did not desire to increase her dislike to the sister of his friend; still he was mortified to find how much his mother's severe expressions concerning Lady Helena had wounded him, and how much her evident intention in making these observations had increased his wish to see, and know Lady Helena—reminding him perhaps of the couplet in the fable.

"I ne'er had been in this condition,
"But for my mother's prohibition."

That year Lady Restormel went to Leamington, where Lady Stanmore and

Lady Helena had recently been, and she heard of nothing but the latters eccentric daring, and what she termed indecorous exhibitions. At a sort of public private masquerade given at the rooms, Lady Helena, though only fifteen, had personated several characters and filled them all to the life; nay one of them was a man's character, and her indelicacy in exposing her person in men's clothes, filled Lady Restormel with horror and indignation! But poor Lady Helena in that case suffered from the misrepresentations of the gossiping and the inaccurate—and perhaps of the malignant; her character was that of a man, but not her dress, for she had represented an astrologer—and under his flowing robes, she had worn her usual habiliments —but having used to the utmost the privilege of a mask, she had not spared the vices or follies of those whom she knew, and had therefore laid herself open to all the malicious animadversions that mortified self-love could dictate. She had also gone about at night in disguise with a hurdy-

gurdy and a mandoline, accompanied by her cousin, Miss Notherby, and a young lady who sang excessively well, and they had, while unknown, gained large contributions from the passers-by, or those under whose windows they performed;—but though the money so gained was sent, according to its original destination, to a poor widow, left with a large and starving family, the daring manner in which it had been obtained, and the notoriety which it gave to the young ladies, insured to them censure, rather than respect, as vanity the love of singularity, and a contempt for decorum were supposed to be the prompter of their exertions, not the benevolent wish to assist distressed fellow-creatures. Such was the judgment which Lady Restormel passed on their conduct—but perhaps she would have been more candid towards Lady Helena, had she not early imbibed a terror lest her son should know and admire her, as her own talents and powers of mind had taught him to value mental superiority in a woman, and she

knew that in Lady Helena Fortescue the sister of his new but intimate friend Captain Fortescue, they were united to excelling loveliness. The next year she was at Malvern just after Lady Helena and her grand-mother had quitted it, and at first her terror-motived dislike of the former had nothing to feed it, for she heard only of her attention to her sick parent and of her charity to the poor; but from some families who had smarted under the lash of Lady Helena's wit, and with whom on her first coming Lady Restormel had made no acquaintance, she soon heard sufficient to gratify her spiteful feelings towards the beautiful offender.

"Yes! Lady Helena, and her cousin had ridden a race together. They had staked their ponies against each other, and ridden them themselves in jockey caps and dresses!—nay, in complete *man's attire*, and *as men ride* according to the report of some, and also on a public race-ground! but even Lady Restormel refused to believe the former representation, though

she gave implicit credit to the latter. But the account was nearly all false; it was true that the young ladies, on an appointed day, rode their own ponies against each other, but it was on side-saddle and in habits, though they did wear different coloured jockey caps; and the scene of their performance was not in a public race-ground, but the park of a mutual friend, where no one was admitted but the acquaintance of both parties. These stories, with many additions, were told to Lady Restormel, and by her repeated to her son when he joined her at Malvern, and it was with indignation that she heard him reply—

"But, remember, dear madam, she is only sixteen!"

"But if she is so fearless and daring at sixteen, what will she be at one and twenty my lord?"

He could have said, sobered, and improved, perhaps, but he forbore, and he even renewed his promise never to accept any invitation to Laurel Grove.

About a year after, and when Lady Helena, having lost her grandmother, had taken up her abode with her parents, Lord Restormel was induced to go to Drury Lane Theatre, to see Kean in one of his best characters; and though Lady Restormel was in a private box, he chose to go into the pit, because the box was too high for him to see all the varying expression of the actor's countenance; for some time his attention was fixed on the performance, but at length it was attracted to a young lady in the stage-box, whose audible though instantly suppressed sob struck upon his ear, and by that means caused his eye to dwell, with a degree of fascination, on a face and form of most uncommon loveliness; her eyes were, meanwhile, rivetted on the scene, and she seemed wholly absorbed in what was going forward, while her expressive countenance formed a marked and correct comment on all that was passing before her, for her cheek was now pale with anxiety—now flushed with indignation;—her lip varied in

its beautiful *contour*, with all the variety of the passions represented, and her dark eye was now suddenly dimmed with tears, or flashing with anger or delight. Lord Restormel could scarcely help smiling at his own enthusiasm, while, as he gazed on her, he said to himself, why should I look at the stage?—I see all that is passing there, reflected in that countenance; and some minutes elapsed, before he also said to himself, but should I like a sister of mine to be so wholly abandoned to her feelings, so wholly regardless of observer's eyes? However, he did say so at *last*, and he resolved to look wholly on the stage in future; but when the act ended, the fulfilment of his wise resolution was deferred, as for want of something else to look at, he was forced to continue to observe this young lady. He fancied her some years older than she was, for she was not quite seventeen, but she looked twenty, from the strong marks of intellect, and the already decided character visible in her countenance; her cheek too was rather pale than

blooming, and except when emotion mantled her ever-varying complexion, the deep vermilion of her lip entirely eclipsed the delicate tints of her cheek; the shape of her head, and her bust, appeared to him the most perfect he had ever seen, and the whiteness of her skin was set off by the simple black gown which she wore; and when she rose he saw that she united the most finished grace of motion to beauty of person. He now found that her countenance was as fascinating in mirth as it had been in anxiety—in smiles as it had been in tears—for she was surrounded by men of various ages, and the eye was now beaming with laughter, which had lately been suffused with sorrow; he also saw that the scarlet shawl was now drawn—now withdrawn from the exposed and ivory shoulder, with, as he feared, coquetish art, and that this gifted creature knew that she was the observed of all beholders, and enjoyed the consciousness. Lord Restormel sighed while he saw this, and wished the curtain would draw up again;

it did so, but his attention still wandered from the stage, though the object of it kept her's again fixed on the performance.

At length came the catastrophe, and her face hidden in her handkerchief, her heaving bosom, and a sort of faintly murmured sobbing expressed her deep sense of the author's—the actor's merit. What! no self-control!—none at all, thought he; poor thing! how her education has been neglected! Had my mother brought her up, she might have been a paragon: poor thing! he repeated again and again, and each time he became more deeply absorbed in gazing on her. But now she was again surrounded, and 'her dark eye smiling through forgotten tears,' she seemed to deal out repartee on repartee to some men, who, though men of fashion, he knew to be unworthy of the notice of any delicate woman.

The farce now begun, and Lord Restormel staid on, though he did not originally intend to do so; but he knew Lady

Restormel did not need his attendance, and he could not conceal from himself that he wished to see the last of the young lady; but she certainly did not gain further on his admiration, by her behaviour during the after-piece, for her laughter was as loud as her grief had been, and called the attention of the house to her box. To express mirth thus loudly, though it was in the sweetest tone possible, was more indelicate, he thought, than to express sorrow; and again, he regretted the bad manner in which the poor thing had been educated; nay, he began to wonder whether his mother had observed her and her behaviour. As this passed his mind, he looked up at her box, and saw her leaning over, and trying, he thought, to discover him. At this moment their eyes met, and Lady Restormel beckoned to him accordingly, with a farewell glance at the incognita, whose features were now still, and whose fine countenance was beaming with intellect and thought;

he left the pit, and proceeded to his mother's box. The instant she saw him, she exclaimed—"Oh, Restormel! did you observe that girl in the stage-box?"

"To be sure I did," he replied, blushing as he spoke, for he knew that he could have added, I scarcely observed any thing else.

"Well, but do you know who it is?"

"No; but I mean to enquire, for she is very beautiful."

"Beautiful! she beautiful!" replied Lady Restormel, changing colour, "well you have mortified me, I thought your sober judgment would have been as disgusted with her as I have been—a forward, fine-eyed, actress-like girl, dressed for effect, and evidently manœuvring to divide the attention of the audience with the actors—and to call *her* beautiful!"

"Beautiful she is in person and face, however defective in manner, for I saw her very near."

"Near, very near Restormel!—well,

but you own you did not like her manner; and to think that forward, assured looking miss is not yet seventeen!"

"I took her for twenty; but who is she?"

"The very girl I have so often talked of—Lady Helena Fortescue."

Lord Restormel at this name felt a strange sensation come over him, and with difficulty he faltered out—"Indeed! that Lady Helena Fortescue!"

"Yes, that is she; and then, for a girl of rank to be in an open box, as if she wished to be as much seen as possible; I really am quite sorry to think so respectable and high-bred a lady, as my old friend, should have a daughter so unworthy of her."

"Surely, surely, dearest mother," said Lord Restormel, in spite of himself, "you judge this young lady rather hastily, not to say severely."

"Restormel!" cried she, laying her hand on his arm, and lowering her tone still more, for she had spoken from the

beginning so as not to be heard by her companions, "do not let me hear you defend Lady Helena Fortescue; I know your intimacy with her brother, and—but no—I know you, Restormel, and I cannot distrust either your prudence or your judgment."

Restormel bowed, as if in submission, but he was not satisfied either with his mother or himself; however, he even was more resolved than before not to venture to Laurel Grove, and he was also resolved he would not let Fortescue know that he had seen, admired, but disapproved his sister.

Not long after, Lord Restormel went first to Ireland, then to France, and was at Lyons, on his way to England, when he received a letter there from Fortescue, telling him that he hoped he could now claim his congratulations for having at length escaped, and for ever, from the chains which he, Lord Restormel, had always considered as unworthy of him, and that he was on the eve of making proposals to a most admirable girl, whom

even his rigid judgment would approve; and then requested him to bring over some pieces of Lyon's silk, as presents for his mistress, his mother, and his sister. But the next post brought a letter from Lord Erpingham, describing the effect which the sudden appearance of Mrs. Tyrawley had had on his son, and adding, that Lady Helena was sure that Mansfeldt, who had taken an aversion to Miss Villeroy, because she had once reproved his impertinences, had thrown Mrs. Tyrawley in Fortescue's way, on purpose to prevent the match; as it was likely that his observant eye had discovered the partiality with which Miss Villeroy, whose life his son had once preserved, had long regarded him. The earl wrote, he said, to beg that Lord Restormel would immediately hasten to England, and be with Captain Fortescue as much as possible, since no one had such power over him as he had. He concluded, he said, that he was in London, but had not heard from him since he left home so abruptly in such an agony of mind.

On receipt of this letter Lord Restormel hastened to Dieppe; and it was that he might get to England for Fortescue's sake as soon as possible, that he embarked in so rash and desperate a way. When he landed at Bognor he sent a messenger to ask for any letters at Brighton, directed to Lord Restormel, and found one from Fortescue, announcing his instant departure for Paris, and his hope to see him there; accordingly Lord Restormel having written to his mother as soon as he had landed, to desire his carriage to meet him at such a place on the road, made the best of his way thither, on or in coaches, as it was his custom to travel in that manner, because he loved to see life and character, and delighted in the variety which this mode of travelling afforded to the often monotonous state in which he was forced to live with Lady Restormel. That lady was far from approving the occasional laying down of his rank and its accompaniments; but she always insisted that when he did emerge from his obscurity, it should be into the

fullness of his glory; she therefore uniformly chose to send his usual equipage for him, with the coronet, the liveries, and the two servants; while on the journey in which he met Lady Helena, he resolved, after passing a few days with his mother, to join Fortescue at Paris, and he was thinking very intently on his friend, his blighted prospects, and the fatal consequences of forming an attachment to an unworthy object, when he was roused from the attitude resembling sleep, by the stopping of the coach to admit Lady Helena. The moment he saw her he recognised her, though he chose to resume his attitude, and seem to sleep. He was soon an attentive listener to all that passed, and had no difficulty in convincing himself that the young lady next him,who had been desired, he found, by her parents to travel as he saw her, but whom Lady Helena rejoined unknown to her's, at the suggestions of her own eccentric will, was the Miss Villeroy whose prospects had been blasted probably by the vindictive artifice of a man

whom he dispised. Chance had thus thrown him into the presence of one woman, whom on principle he wished the most to avoid, and of another whom he most wished to see—while his judgment impelled him from the one and his compassion and curiosity urged him to stay with the other. Therefore, though at first he resolved to leave the coach, as Lady Helena was become an inmate of it, he satisfied his conscience for rescinding this resolution, by saying within himself, "I ought to stay to protect this strangely exposed Miss Villeroy; her friend needs no protection, and deserves whatever disagreeable situations her folly may expose her to." He did not at first intend to be himself her chastiser, and by his own behaviour shew the unfitness of her conduct, but meant to be a quiet listener and observer of what passed. To remain so, however, was impossible. Lady Helena forced him into the arena, and for her sake he saw it was necessary for him not to let her retire unwounded from the combat: but for his

own he had better have remained inactive. He had the heart to wound her, but not to see her suffer under the pain he inflicted, without feeling pity of a most dangerous nature—pity to which an equally dangerous sensation of self-reproach was united, for what right thought he have I to wound the feeling of this amiable, though rash and ill-educated girl? Therefore, whatever Lady Helena's distress of mind might be from the consequences of her ill-advised journey, Lord Restormel's bore some degree of comparison with it, and while wrapped in painful contemplation he journeyed towards his home, he caught himself frequently exclaiming in the secret recesses of his heart—"Thank heaven! my mother can never know of this rencontre, nor the impropriety of conduct which occasioned it!" Yet, why should I, hitherto open and ingenuous in my dealings with every one, and particularly so to my mother, why should I now not only wish to conceal the adventures of to-day from her, but feel an utter impossibility to disclose them?

The reason was he thought obvious—it was two-fold. In the first place, he had no right to disclose to any one a secret which he had only surprised, and ought, therefore, to respect Lady Helena's intended incognita; in the next place, it would, he felt, be cruel and ungenerous in him to mention to Lady Restormel a circumstance which could not fail to draw down on her head the severe but just censure of that unindulgent judge.

Accordingly, when he reached Green Hills, his mind was made up to the necessity of concealing his adventures in the stage-coach; and Lady Restormel was too much engaged by the delight of seeing him again in safety and unhurt after his perils at sea, on which he dwelt more than he would otherwise have done, to turn her attention from his unusual abstraction, to put questions to him on his comparatively uninteresting proceedings by land.

The next morning, however, he did not escape without some trials, both to his feelings and ingenuousness. He received

by the post of that day a letter from Fortescue, dated London, when he expected that he was at Paris. In this letter he said he had met Lord Aston on the road, he being sufficiently recovered to proceed to England, by slow stages; and that his brother was already on his way to Laurel Grove, but that he was detained in London by business, and earnestly wished to see Lord Restormel there.

As he read this letter aloud, it gave Lady Restormel an opportunity of exclaiming—"What a strange, capricious young man! you told me last night that he had requested you to meet him at Paris, and he is now flown back to London; I doubt he is an unsteady character, Restormel!—Poor, dear Lady Erpingham! with an elder son in bad health, and such a daughter, and such a younger son, she is really much to be pitied!"

"I doubt much whether Lady Erpingham considers herself as an object of pity," he replied, deeply blushing, "and the world, in general, looks upon her, no

doubt, as a very enviable mother:—Fortescue's unfortunate attachment is not known to every one."

"You do not mean to say, I hope, that he is still attached to that woman, who is now another man's wife?"

"I mean that the consequences of that attachment subsist still, namely, an impossibility to love and marry any other woman."

"What imbecility of mind!—what a want of energy of character!—well, Restormel, Lady Erpingham is more to be pitied than I though she was: I hope you will not be prevailed upon by Captain Fortescue to accompany him to Laurel Grove?"

"No, madam; I give you my word of honor that I will not."

"That is enough; Lady Helena Fortescue is there, I conclude?"

"No; I believe she is not there now."

"How should you know that?—does her brother mention her in his letters to you?"

"Sometimes; and Lady Helena is, probably, now in London."

"In London!—and shall you see her?"

"I dare say not, for she is in all probability at Sir George Villeroy's—and—and—"

"Why do you hesitate?"

"Nay, it was unnecessary, as I may venture to tell you that Fortescue has been talked of for Miss Villeroy, and that circumstances make it nearly impossible he should visit his sister; therefore, it is equally impossible that I should make Lady Helena's acquaintance."

"I am glad of it—she looks artful—and your poor brother's fate, and Captain Fortescue's, have given me a distrust of female artifice, and sorry should I be to see you, my dear Charles, exposed to a struggle between your affections and your principles."

"Not more sorry than I should be," replied Restormel, sighing involuntarily;

"and I can readily believe, though I do not think she looks artful, that Lady Helena Fortescue is not to be approached with impunity; therefore, I shall avoid, rather than seek her acquaintance; and I will refuse to be presented to her if I can do so without pointed rudeness."

Lady Restormel expressed herself satisfied with this assurance, and tried to be so, but she was not; she saw that her son had been greatly struck with the personal graces of Lady Helena, and she was by no means sure that that man was not already under the power of the woman whom he felt it prudent to avoid; and how her fears would have been increased, had she known he had already seen her, and had concealed the meeting from her! but she could do no more—she had warned him: but never did mother more earnestly desire a husband for the eldest of her eight girls, than Lady Restormel for this dangerous daughter of the house of Fortescue, though not of her own providing.

We left Lady Helena and Julia at the door of Sir George Villeroy's house, and *there* the former chose to remain, till Julia had announced her unexpected arrival; but it was some minutes before she could announce it, as she was so overpowered at sight of the alarming change in her father's appearance since she saw him last, that she could only weep, and return in silence the tearful caresses which he bestowed on her. It was unnecessary, however, for in the midst of this ebullition of parental and filial feelings, Lady Villeroy not liking to witness it, went to the window and saw Lady Helena.

"Why, Julia," cried she, and in no pleasant tone of voice, "what does this mean, and why have you brought Lady Helena with you?—to be sure she is not come to stay?"

"I am sure I hope she is," answered Sir George—"I shall delight to have my old friend's child under my roof before I die, for their going to a hotel, when last here, preyed upon me sadly."

"Stuff!" muttered Lady Villeroy, "but speak, girl!—let me know the worst."

Sir George, meanwhile, was hobbling down to invite Lady Helena in, and assist her from the carriage, and her affectionate heart was shocked to see how ill he looked.

"Dear, Sir George," cried she, springing out, "how kind this is! then Lady Villeroy and you will admit me!"

"Admit you! to our home and our hearts; why did you stay at the door for a moment? but how did you come?—not in that vile machine to be sure?"

"Oh, yes I did."

"What! did Lord and Lady Erpingham allow their daughter to travel in a stage coach?—Impossible! nor would I have allowed mine, if— but I must not think that way, or I shall misbehave; but do explain."

"What! has not Julia told you every thing?"

"No, poor thing! she has not spoken yet," he replied, his voice faltering as he

said it, " and you might have been at the door till now, had not Lady Villeroy seen you."

Lady Villeroy now advanced coldly and stiffly to meet Lady Helena, saying, " This was an honor I did not expect."

" But not the less welcome," said Sir George, " and it was kind in you so to come."

" No, no," replied Lady Helena, with gentleness, as she was resolved to be very good, " it was not kind, because I am here, *malgre moi*."

She then explained the causes and motives of her enforced visit to Gloucester Place, and Sir George thanked her again and again for having chosen to share the enforced degradation of Julia. Lady Helena then assured Lady Villeroy that she could take part of Julia's bed, and that as Mrs. Seebright was absent, the naughty girl would go back to papa and mamma as soon as her maid should arrive in London.

"Your maid! is she coming?" asked Lady Villeroy.

"Yes, and man too, I hope," cried Sir George; and, I assure you, the best bed is up again, and shall not be taken down again while I live," he added, nodding significantly as he spoke.

"You are always harping on that string, Sir George," cried Lady Villeroy, "but I will appeal to Lady Helena, whether she does not think that, ill as you are, it is better not to be tempted to have staying company, and therefore the fewer beds the better."

"My dear madam," replied Lady Helena, but keeping under, with laudable resolution, her inclination to be saucy, in her reply to this indelicate speech, "you are a better judge than I, or any one can be, of Sir George's ability to bear company, and your plans are probably, therefore, founded on experience; consequently, I hold myself ready to go away directly, and return to my friend's empty house, if it so pleases you."

"Oh! dear, no! not on any account," cried Lady Villeroy, subdued by her unexpected courtesy, while Sir George seized her by the arm lest she should escape. In a few minutes the necessary directions were given; Lady Helena was installed in the best chamber, having privately desired her servant to provide himself with a lodging at the nearest hotel, and poor Sir George, as the coffee was carried round, declared that he believed the return of Julia, and the visit of Lady Helena would lengthen his life some years. But if Julia was struck at the alteration in her father's appearance, he was no less shocked at that in her's; her cheek had lost its bloom and its fulness, and he feared that Captain Fortescue's attentions, as they had meant nothing, might have been fatal to her peace; still she was grown more beautiful than he had ever expected, and he wondered what was become of her high shoulders and narrow chest; then her dress, what elegant simplicity! no bed-curtain

gown disfigured her now; and while he surveyed her becoming apparel with approving delight, Lady Villeroy was eyeing it askance, and trembling to think what a bill would be sent in from Lady Helena's milliner! It was no wonder that Lady Villeroy became more than usually eloquent on the distresses of the times,-and the necessity for the strictest economy; at another time Lady Helena would not have been able to resist this temptation to play on the feelings of Lady Villeroy, and work up her avaricious fears to agony, but mortification and conscious error had stolen her usual spirits, and when they had retired for the night, Lady Villeroy owned to Sir George, that she never saw a girl so improved as Lady Helena.

"Yes, one still more so," he replied.

"Whom?"

"My own dear Julia!—do you not think so?"

"She is very well," said Lady Villeroy, unable to bear to own the improvement of

which she was equally conscious, especially to Sir George, of whose exclusive attachment she was still tenacious.

"Very well!—only very well!—I tell you, she looks like an angel, and like one who is all angel already too!" Here he heaved a deep sigh, and she who was not all angel now, nor even yet in a way to be so, felt that she would have spared herself the present mortification had she been more generous.

CHAP. X.

The next morning brought a letter for Lady Helena from Laurel Grove, and dreading the reproof which she deserved, she trembled to open it, especially before strangers; she therefore withdrew with Julia to her own room. It was, however, some relief to her feelings to see that the hand-writing was that of her indulgent mother; but when she read—'Your father is so highly irritated against you that he dare not trust himself to write, and has therefore given up the pen to me.' She could scarcely read what followed, for she was almost blinded with tears. 'He desires me to say that your disobedience and assumption of independence in leaving home without leave, and in so offensive and improper a manner, and your rudeness in doing so when old and respected friends

were our guests, will, however, be punished when you learn, that our dear and suffering Aston is arrived at Laurel Grove to be nursed into health by his mother and sister again if possible—that sister who—' Here Lady Helena threw down the letter, unable to read any more, her father's anger, her brother's illness, and her absence at the moment of the beloved invalid's return, were too much for her already agitated spirits, and it was some time before Julia's gentle soothings could restore her to composure.

" But what of my return!" she suddenly exclaimed, snatching up the letter. ' I need not tell you Aston's disappointment at not seeing you,—he must have passed you on the road. I would have sent off an express for you immediately, but your father would not suffer me, he said the post would reach you time enough—and he desired I would respect your assumed independence of the duties, and tell you he did not presume to wish you to come till it was your pleasure so to do.' Here she was again over-

whelmed. 'But my dear child, I speak differently for myself; I know you do not wish to be independent of your duties, and I say, Come! come directly! your mother's arms are open to receive you, and so are Aston's! and when your father sees the truant's dear face again, and a tearful face too it will be I know Helena, all will be forgotten and forgiven!'"

"That is so like my dear, dear indulgent mother!" sobbing as she spoke, "but, what is next?" 'Oh, Gibbs will not reach London till hours after you receive this; therefore, you cannot set off till the next day: I conclude you will keep John to attend you, but that will be unnecessary if Marcus, who is staying in London on business, and is at his old quarters in Vere-street, accompanies you back.'

"Marcus in London!" exclaimed Lady Helena—"did you hear that Julia?"

"I did," she replied, turning pale as death, while a sort of convulsive emotion passed across her face; but she soon recovered herself, and was able to say,

" what else does dear Aunt Erpingham tell you ?"

" Why she advises me to conceal from Marcus my clandestine departure, and the way in which I travelled, lest he should blame me! *I* stoop to conceal an action lest it should procure me blame! No, little does she know me! I have deserved censure, and I court it as a just and salutary penance for my fault: *I* shrink from the reproaches of Marcus! no indeed—I can even exist under my own, and dread them much more; besides, I shall not see him, he would not like I should go to the hotel, and I cannot ask him hither you know."

" And why not; do you suppose I shall dislike to see Captain Fortescue ?"

" That is not the question, but, whether it is proper that you should see him, and he visit here."

" And why should he not ?"

" Because I think he has not used you well, and your father may be of the same opinion."

" I can never admit that he used me

ill; he never said he loved me, though it was evident that he thought he did, and he must have more than suspected that I loved him; but as soon as he found that he had deceived himself, he took care to deceive me no longer; therefore, my way is clear before me, and so says Miss Brightwen in her last precious letter. It is a duty I owe myself to behave now as if Captain Fortescue had never been any thing to me but a friend, and as if I felt for him nothing but friendship; under the present circumstances, female pride and delicacy enjoin me not only to endeavour to subdue my feelings, but to act as if they were subdued.

"And can you do this? and is not this, (a lesson evidently learnt by heart I see, and taught by that Christian philosopher Sophia Brightwen) however proper in theory, impossible in practice?"

"I humbly trust not," replied Julia, lifting her tearful eyes to heaven, "I have now been studying it for many days as I know the time must come when I must

see Captain Fortescue again, and I believe that I shall be able to meet the trial with firmness."

"You are an admirable creature, Julia," cried Lady Helena, embracing her, "and I wonder with the man in the stage coach, I cannot bear to name him! that any man could have the heart to wound you! Well, then, if Sir George does not forbid, I may invite Marcus hither, may I?"

"Yes, I will ask papa to invite him; and the sooner I do so the better."

Accordingly she went to his study, and with a tolerably firm voice she told Sir George that Captain Fortescue was in London, and that she hoped he would invite him to come and see his sister.

"His sister! and only his sister! but how is this, Julia, did he not pay you particular attention?"

"Yes, but he did not use me ill; and I shall see him with pleasure, and I trust without emotion now. If you do not ask him you know he will have reason to believe that you are angry, and that I am

love-sick, papa, and he must not be allowed to think either the one or the other!"

"Dear, wise, forgiving girl! why, Julia, how you talk, like a little Solomon! well, my dear, do as you please—write to him if you will, and ask him to dinner!"

Here Lady Villeroy, who had just entered, cast no very kind glance on the little Solomon, and exclaimed—

"Pray whom are you going to ask to dinner? No one with my consent."

"But, my dear, it is only Captain Fortescue."

"He, of all people! how indelicate it would look, as if you wanted to force your daughter upon him, and as if she wanted it too."

"It is not my wish that he should dine here, madam," replied Julia, coldly, "I only want that he should be told he may call here on Lady Helena."

"Well, that may do for the present; but mark me, Lady Villeroy, dine here he shall one day, and have a dinner fit to eat too!"

Julia now authorized Lady Helena to write to her brother, and she appointed him to call that morning. Never was surprise greater than Fortescue's when he received the note, and found his sister was in London; and never had he felt more embarrassed, than when he saw where she was. How could he dare to present himself before Julia; however, she probably would not appear; yet, that was not likely, for his sister said Julia desires me tell you Sir George hopes you will call on me, and that he shall be well enough to see you.

"What shall I do, Restormel," said he to his friend, who was with him, and had marked his varying countenance?

"Go, to be sure."

"But I dread going; the sight of Julia, and the recollections of my feelings when I saw her last, before that destroying angel came across my path, will upset all my recovered composure."

"Then you own that Miss Villeroy is not an object of indifference to you?"

"Certainly not; and I thought I loved her till—— Restormel, you must go with me, and then I shall be less embarrassed; indeed, you must go, besides, I want to present you to Helena, whom you never saw, you know; and I also want to hear your opinion of Julia- she is exactly the girl to please Lady Restormel."

"And I suspect her son too."

"Do you say so, then I had better go without you perhaps?"

"Much better; no, I cannot accompany you," said Lord Restormel, with emotion.

"Are you afraid of falling in love with Julia, because she is dear to me?"

"No, not at all."

"Then it is Helena whom you fear! I see how it is, you are prejudiced against her, and I as her brother feel offended, my lord; she is my sister, and you ought not to allow yourself to believe ought against her on the report of others. I have heard that Lady Restormel is not very candid in her strictures on Helena; but do as you

please, sir—I would not force my sister, Lady Helena Fortescue, on the notice of a prince!"

"Nor shall you force her on mine, Marcus. I will willingly accompany you to Gloucester Place, after what you have said, I should not be easy to do otherwise."

"When shall we go? I cannot go till to-morrow, though they wish me to call to-day, but I shall write, and say I will be at Sir George's punctually at twelve."

"Be it so, and I will be here in time."

It was well, perhaps, for Julia that she received a letter from Miss Brightwen by that day's post, breathing her usual strain of pious instruction, and renewing her advice to Julia how she was to behave in case of her again being thrown in the way of Captain Fortescue. But a letter which she received from Sophia the next day was equally efficacious in preparing her for the dreaded interview, by overwhelming her with a grief so severe and well founded, that

every other pain faded before it; Julia learnt by this letter that Lady Villeroy had written to inform her she was not to return to Gloucester Place, as Miss Villeroy had no further occasion for her services. This was a trial indeed! and one which she had not expected, though Lady Villeroy had darkly hinted at it, and declared, that, such was the badness of the times, they should be obliged to curtail their expenses. While weeping over this letter, Julia forgot even the approaching visit of Captain Fortescue, nor did his arrival when announced, call forth in her any of those emotions which she had feared to feel.

"I cannot come down to him yet," said she, as Lady Helena left the room, "but do not fear for me! I am firm, and when I have done weeping I will make my appearance."

Little did Lady Helena expect, when she entered the drawing-room, the surprise that awaited her. Fortescue had purposely omitted to inform her that he

should be accompanied by the man whom she had always declared herself so desirous to behold. Lord Restormel, meanwhile, awaited her entrance with a degree of flutter at his heart, which it would have gratified her wounded feelings to be assured of: he had resolved to receive her as a perfect stranger, and to leave it to her to acknowledge him as an acquaintance or not, according as her pride or other feelings might dictate—when the door opened, and Marcus said in a tone of evident relief, for she was not accompanied by Julia--" Oh! here is Helena!" Lord Restormel was looking out of the window, nor did he turn round, till Fortescue said, " Now, Helena, let me present my dearest friend to you—Lord Restormel! Lady Helena Fortescue!" He then drew near, bowing most respectfully and distantly, and though he raised his eyes to her blushing face, it was without one look of recognition.

" Lord Restormel and I have met before," said Lady Helena, assuming the

utmost dignity, though trembling with emotion and surprise; "nor can I flatter myself that he has forgotten our meeting, though he has been so considerate as not to name it to my brother."

"How is this?—how strange it was in you, my lord, not to tell me you knew Helena; it is impossible you should have met her where she ought not to be seen."

"*Ne gagez pas*," replied Lady Helena, while Lord Restormel looked more and more embarrassed; "Lord Restormel will not say so, and I own that his silence on the subject of our meeting, while I feel the kindness of it, mortifies me to the quick." Here, spite of herself, tears rushed into her eyes, while Lord Restormel vainly endeavoured to stammer out an explanation to the wondering and impatient Fortescue. But Lady Helena chose to give it herself, and she did so with such truth and such candour, that Lord Restormel forgot the impropriety of her conduct, and even entirely forgave it, for the sake of the winning ingenuousness with which she

avowed her fault, and the generous severity with which she blamed it.

"Helena! Helena!" cried Marcus, shaking his head, "you are a rash, daring, incorrigible girl."

"No, no, not incorrigible, I trust, especially when my error brought its punishment along with it; ask your friend whether he did not know both me and my companion all the time."

"I did; for I had seen you before, madam, and I easily guessed who your companion was."

"Therefore, you—you resolved by your behaviour, my lord, to show the rash girl the folly of her daring."

"I did so; and I now most humbly request your ladyship's pardon for my well-meant, though, perhaps, officious presumption."

"My lord, I have long forgiven you, though not myself."

'What can this mean; and pray what presumption in your lordship's behaviour

to her, has Lady Helena Fortescue to forgive?" cried Marcus, colouring deeply.

"None, Marcus, but what a brother must approve; Lord Restormel acted the part of a friend, and I only was to blame."

"Well, good people, you deal in mysteries."

"No; I dislike mysteries, brother. I tell you a simple truth, that, in the wildness of my ungoverned will, I chose to be where I had no business to be; that then I chose to behave as I had no business to behave, and that Lord Restormel, with a kindness for which I shall be ever thankful, made it his business to reprove me, to the best of his power; believe me, I I have scarcely had a moment's peace since, from the consciousness how ill you must think of me, my lord—I have felt so degraded in my own eyes."

"And, therefore, how exalted you must be in mine, Lady Helena," cried Lord Restormel.

"Well, Helena, Lord Restormel has reason to be proud," observed Marcus, with an arch smile; "all you have said proves how highly you value his good opinion; and it also proves that you made your confession with a view to recover it."

"I must desire," replied Lady Helena, with her utmost haughtiness of manner, her eyes flashing disdainfully, and her cheeks reddening with indignation, "that neither Lord Restormel nor yourself will put so wrong a construction on my motives. I have been actuated simply by a wish to regain my own good opinion, by confessing my fault, and blaming it severely and justly; and having in a measure done so, I am comparatively very indifferent to what any one else may think on the subject." Then proudly curtsying, she was going to leave the room, while Lord Restormel, piqued, yet pleased, turned again to the window to hide his conscious emotion, when Julia entered, and Fortescue hastened to meet her in no small agitation; on seeing that her eyes were red

with weeping, as he attributed her tears to the idea of meeting him; but as she gave him her hand, her tears so evidently redoubled, and she seemed so little desirous to conceal them, that he begun to think his self-love had deceived him, and he was sure it had done so, when Julia exclaimed —"Oh, Captain Fortescue, I am so miserable! but I suppose Lady Helena has told you all."

"Not I, indeed, my dear," said her friend, coming down a little from her altitudes, "I have been too much engrossed with my own miseries to think of your's. Do you not see who is here?—a forward, impertinent youth, who loves 'toad in a hole.'"

"Amazement!" cried Julia, with eyes sparkling through her tears. "Lord Restormel, welcome to Gloucester Place;" and as she extended her hand to him, he pressed it respectfully to his lips.

"So then you are friends, I see," said Fortescue: "I suppose it was not necessary for Restormel to lecture you on the

impropriety of your behaviour, Miss Villeroy."

"No, Marcus, it was not; on the contrary he complimented her, and by implication at my expense, and compared her to Una."

"Indeed! Restormel was always famous for discrimination."

"Your ladyship does my poor sayings too much honor in remembering them," said Lord Restormel; "but why is Miss Villeroy afflicted?—again I must wonder that any one could have the heart to afflict you."

"Has a true maratre a heart think you?" asked Lady Helena. "Marcus, the poor girl is broken-hearted, because Lady Villeroy has forbidden Miss Brightwen to come hither again, and Julia thinks this quite a trial."

"Yes, indeed, the greatest I have ever known," said she.

Fortescue felt oddly while she said this, and she said it with great simplicity, for at that moment she fancied that she

spoke the truth, and he tried to think that his mind was relieved by this declaration, while he rapidly assured Julia how deeply he sympathised in her distress.

"Then, now, Marcus and you, my lord, as you have my improvement so much at heart, I call on you both to sympathise in my joy on this occasion—*à quelque chose malheur est bon*, and I shall gain, I trust, what Julia loses, and when I have Julia's monitor with me, who knows but I may, in time, become as proper and pretty behaved as Julia herself?"

"You want no monitor but your own excellent head and heart, Lady Helena," said Lord Restormel.

"May be so; but as they are both silent and sulky sometimes, and will not speak, it may be as well for me to have a monitor at hand, who is always ready to speak, and speaks always wisely."

"Who is this paragon?—I should like to know her."

"That you would, my lord, she is the original of that fair transcript yonder;

she is the real Una, believe me; is not this true, Marcus?"

"Quite true; and I shall be happy and proud, for all our sakes, to see Miss Brightwen, the constant inmate of our house; but will this ever be Helena?"

"Oh, yes, I am sure papa and mamma will consent, for then they will be certain there will be no more travelling in stage-coaches for me, or any other improprieties; then, instead of being as I am now, a flaunting honey-suckle, throwing about my luxuriant branches here and there, and every where, careless, uncut and unconfined, I shall become a prim, modest, privet bush, allowed to grow to a certain height, and then kept down by rule. Indeed, my lord, you have no idea what a lopper the Brightwen is, and how I shall improve under her shears."

"Prim!—and am I prim, Lady Helena?" said Julia.

"You! oh no, my dear child, but prim I shall be, as I am always in extremes, you know."

"I only know that you are always undervaluing yourself, and I wish I did not want, dear, dear Miss Brightwen, more than you do."

"Well, say no more, I am tired of talking of myself, and all this time, Marcus, you have told me nothing of our beloved Aston."

Captain Fortescue now gave his opinion of Lord Aston to Lady Helena, while Julia and Lord Restormel talked together till the entrance of Sir George and Lady Villeroy interrupted both conferences.

Sir George received Captain Fortescue even cordially, and pleased with his manly countenance and manner, he not only invited him to dinner the next day, as Lady Helena was willing to defer her journey in order to meet him, but gave him a general invitation to the house while he remained in London. Lord Restormel was included in the invitation to dinner, but he declined accepting it, as he was going to leave London; and very soon after the friends, having business to transact, took their leave.

Julia, as soon as they were gone, retired to her own room, with a heart full of thankfulness that she had been able to subdue conscious weakness, so as not to betray any signs of still lurking attachment to the object of it, and Lady Helena was pleased that she had had an opportunity of proudly disclaiming any intention on her part to conciliate the good-will of Lord Restormel. Still she had not entirely convinced herself that her violence was any proof of this indifference, or that Lord Restormel would think it such, and when she looked into her own heart, she saw clearly that she was even more desirous of pleasing him than ever.

Neither Fortescue nor his friend left Gloucester Place more satisfied with the morning interview than Lady Helena. Neither man nor woman, as I said before, loves to give up the power which either has once possessed; and Fortescue saw, with surprise and mortification, the unusual self-possession with which Julia had addressed him, and that composure of man-

ner so little consistent with a conscious attachment. She loves me no longer, I see, said he to himself, then surely she never did love me, or even my strange conduct could not so soon have obliterated her love—love, the result of gratitude too! and spite of himself he felt dissatisfied and uneasy, resolving to watch her every look and tone the next day; and making himself believe that he wished to find her cure was certain, since he was very sure he should never love her well enough to marry her. Sometimes, too, he fancied that an attachment would spring up between her and Lord Restormel, and trying to be generous, he thought he should rejoice to see it; but he sighed when he imaged this union to himself, for he felt what a happy husband Julia's husband would be.

Lord Restormel was equally full of reverie, and unpleasant reverie too! as they walked down Gloucester Place, for he had not only convinced himself that his intercourse with Lady Helena would in-

evitably make him enamoured of her charms, but also, that should she return his love (and her want of repose of manner when she conversed with him, might have emboldened the most modest of men to hope) the decision of her character, and loftiness of her spirit would always prevent her from being on good terms with his mother, as even love itself would, probably, not teach her submission; therefore, an union between them would, he clearly saw, be likely to destroy her happiness, his own, and that of Lady Restormel, and that he must more than ever avoid the presence of Lady Helena Fortescue. Such were his cogitations when Marcus broke from his reverie, and abruptly asked him what he thought of Miss Villeroy?

"I think her very pretty," he replied, "and a perfect model of feminine delicacy and gentleness; indeed, the man who gains her must be a happy man."

"Yes, I thought she would just suit you; you had better propose to her."

"I have no inclination to do it:—admiration and approbation are not love."

"No, but they go some way towards it."

"Yes, but in this case they would halt by the way, I suspect."

"Well, but how do you like my sister, Restormel?—you hesitate, and look as if approbation here was entirely out of the question."

"Oh no, not so, Marcus! who but must approve her candour, her honesty, her ingenuous self-blame, and her form, her countenance, the tone of her voice?" here he heaved a deep sigh, and was suddenly silent.

"Is that all? what! not one word of her lofty bearing, and that proud, disdainful brow, that high spirit which beamed from every feature of her fine face, when she feared you should fancy that she wished to charm you."

"Fortescue! I wished only to praise your sister; therefore, I paused abruptly. You know I do not admire high spirit in

a woman, and yet, I must own, her pride becomes her. How beautiful she looked at that moment!"

Fortescue was satisfied; there was a heightened glow on his friend's cheek, and a faltering of his voice while he spoke, which made him flatter himself that the first wish of his heart might not be so difficult of accomplishment as he sometimes thought it; but he was too wise to say so; he was, however, disappointed, when he found Lord Restormel persist in his intention of leaving London the next day, though he might have dined in company with his sister had he been willing to stay: he also found him firm, as before, in his refusal to meet him at Laurel Grove; and when they parted, spite of his desire to believe that Lady Helena, with all her faults, had made no slight impression on Lord Restormel, his fears at least counterbalanced his hopes; Julia, meanwhile, had made her own private remarks. The state of her own heart had taught her

quick-sightedness into the heart of others, and being glad to escape from her uncomfortable feelings, she had endeavoured to find out in Lord Restormel, during his visit, some of those marks of strong interest in Lady Helena, which she had observed in the coach, and she had seen them: there was an ease in his manner when he addressed and complimented her, which it had not when he approached or spoke to her friend, and Julia was through the rest of the day, on which he called, and even till the hour of dinner, expecting to hear that Lord Restormel had written to say he was still in London, and would dine with them. But he did not come, and Lady Helena, whom she had taught to believe, and hope as she did, was, like her, disappointed. However, Fortescue came, and Julia saw with fearful pleasure how delighted her father was with his company, and how eagerly he promised to accept Sir George's invitation, to come to them whenever he was disengaged, even though

the table was any thing but an attractive one. Yet, though the hope of seeing that being from time to time, if not from day to day, to whom every faculty of her innocent heart was devoted, gave a degree of secret satisfaction to Julia, which tinted her cheek with all its former bloom, and beamed in every glowing feature; parting with Lady Helena, was even a greater trial than she expected, and the prospect of living with her unamiable mother-in-law, uncheered, unsupported by a companion that was congenial to her, threw a cloud over her path, which scarcely the brightness of love could penetrate and remove. Lady Helena was still less able to say farewell with composure, though cheered with the prospect of seeing her brother at the end of her journey, and though sure not only that her petition to her parents to invite Miss Brightwen to reside with them, as a sort of superintendent of her studies, would be instantly complied with, but that she too might possibly meet her on her arrival. But it was not alone the

idea of a long separation from Julia, which overwhelmed Lady Helena with such sorrow as caused her to sit back in the chaise with her handkerchief at her eyes for several miles after they drove from Gloucester Place; it was the conviction that she carried away, in her heart, the image and remembrance of one who evidently avoided her, and who, if attracted by her personal graces, was repelled by her mental deformities, as he would undoubtedly call them, and one too whom her pride vainly urged her to forget, because her judgment and her taste united to prove to her how much he deserved to be remembered and admired! How dearly was Lady Helena paying for the rash indulgence of her curiosity and eccentricity in accompanying Julia to London! Yet such are the inconsistencies, such is the strange pleasure attendant on the pain of a growing and conscious attachment, that Lady Helena could not regret that she had come as she did to London, could not regret that Lord Restormel had been the companion of her

journey, *even* under such circumstances. The desire of her heart had been granted; the image of her fancy was now clothed in a real form, not less attractive than that which imagination had so long portrayed, and though the consciousness of being burthened with a secret anxiety deluged her cheek with tears, and she saw no prospect of beholding the object of it again; still life had acquired a new interest in her eyes, and though she said mentally—"Oh! I am very unhappy!" she had a satisfaction in saying so, which she would have been sorry to exchange for the late repose of her feelings. The postillion having received no particular directions, had taken a road entirelynew to Lady Helena, though she was unconscious of it, but she did not long remain so.

"What a beautiful house we are coming to, my lady," said her abigail as they approached Burford Bridge! Lady Helena looked up, and could not help desiring to know to whom it belonged.

"It is Lady Restormel's," was the driver's answer.

In a moment Lady Helena's head was out of the window, nor did she withdraw her eyes from the beautiful scene, till she could nearly behold it no longer; not that Lady Helena saw its classic architecture, or its verdant lawns, so as to be able to describe them; but it was *his* home! and *he* was there! nay, he might be wandering in its neighbourhood, and perhaps she might see him. The possibility startled while it pleased her, and she suddenly drew in her head again, conscious and ashamed, though the house was still in sight. It was as well that she did so, for its owner was now in sight also; not that he expected to see Lady Helena pass, and was therefore watching for her, but he was on one of his morning rambles to his mother's cottages, and at the moment that Lady Helena's post-chaise drew near, he was cutting a hazel stick from a hedge; a little peasant boy who was accustomed to receive a pat on the head, and sometimes a halfpenny from him, had just

then ventured to ask of him this more troublesome courtesy. He did not see Lady Helena as soon as she saw him, and she was able, half-timid, half-assured, to gaze on him as he stood bare headed, for his hat had fallen off when he ascended the hedge, and he was smiling with the complacency of satisfied benevolence, while extending the twig to the stretched out arms of the blooming and delighted child. But on seeing the chaise, and recognizing the servant who sat on the driving box, he started; his countenance changed from one of calm pleasure, to one of blushing emotion, and as his foot slipped while he descended the hedge bank, it seemed, as the road was very narrow, to come in dangerous contact with the wheel. Lady Helena screamed involuntarily—while Lord Restormel called to the driver to stop, and in evident confusion, and with almost incoherent courtesy, the lady hoped he was not hurt, and the gentleman replied to the question. The conference was very short, though each wished

it longer; but they were both painfully conscious, though equally pleased; and when Lady Helena gave the command to drive on, Lord Restormel did not urge her to stay, though when she was gone, he regretted his want of sufficient self-possession to do so, and she said within herself—"how silly it was in me to seem in such a hurry to go—who knows when we shall meet again!" While he consoled himself by thinking—"Well! it is better as it is, perhaps, for if my mother had happened to come up! shall I tell her I saw her? no, if I do she will think I expected her. It is better to say nothing about it, she knows I called on her with her brother, and that information gave her so much pain, I do not like to distress her again. No—no, I had better say nothing about it. But how interestingly beautiful she looked! the tone of her voice too was so subdued! so sweet! and she had evidently been in tears—tears were on her cheek."

Lady Helena, meanwhile, had her pleasing reveries also; when she was de-

spairing of seeing Lord Restormel again, chance had thrown him in her way, and he had seemed as confused, and as full of blushes and pleasure as herself. In vain did Gibbs point out another beautiful house to her—she saw it not—she saw nothing but a man in a hedge cutting a stick—she recalled nothing but the beating of her heart when he turned round; and she recognized him, together with all the rapid, but to her distinct feelings, which the sudden meeting occasioned in her bosom, and which, the feelings of alarm excepted, were, she believed, accurately reflected in his. This was the happiest recollection of her life, and she was so absorbed in it, that she did not at first hear what her servant said at the door of the post-chaise, when she stopped at the first stage, namely, that all the horses were out, and would not be back for half an hour at least. "Then I will get out and walk," replied Lady Helena, and being directed along the road which she was to go, she desired

to be taken up, and followed by Gibbs; she ascended a hill, which commanded a fine view of the adjacent country, at the foot of which stood the mansion of Lady Restormel; Lady Helena was glad to see it again. It was the abode of him whose image was then uppermost in her thoughts, and glowing too with smiles and blushes, which it required no great self-flattery for her to impute to feelings in unison with her own. But, alas! while she gazed on the fair scene beneath her, and thought how delightful it would be to live there with such a companion as Lord Restormel, the fancied image of his frowning mother presented itself to her startled view, and clouded over her prospect. At this instant Lady Helena heard a well-remembered voice exclaim, just behind her, "I hope you admire what you see, Lady Helena;" and turning round, she beheld him of whom she was then so intently thinking.

Lord Restormel had set off on his usual ride soon after she left him, and, whether unconsciously or designedly, had

followed the track of her wheels, but not expecting to see her again, when he beheld her walking on the road before him. To go back without speaking to her was beyond his resolution, and giving his horse to his servant, he accosted her as I have mentioned above, and was not sorry, propably, to see what effect would be produced by his sudden appearance and abrupt address. However, when she turned round, radiant in beauty, and her eyes, spite of herself, sparkling with joy at sight of him, he was so full of emotion and pleasing confusion himself, that he was unable to form an accurate judgment of her's, and he gave a very incoherent reason for being on that spot at that identical moment. Lady Helena herself did not talk, for the first minute or two, with her usual precision, for he was there —and she was caught by him contemplating his residence; she soon, however, recollected herself sufficiently, to put on her hat which she had taken off, and had let her long black ringlets float unfettered

on the breeze; and though the hat covered these beauties, Lord Restormel was glad she resumed it. He thought it was indecorous to walk bare-headed in a public road, and if his mother had come by at the moment, he knew what her opinion would have been. He now asked why Lady Helena was walking?—and when he heard she would, probably, have to walk an hour before she was overtaken, he sighed with mortification to think that he dared not invite her to Green Hills, though there was a pathway down the hill, which led to the park-gate, and he fancied that as she glanced her eye towards the house, Lady Helena wondered at his want of attention and hospitality in not urging her to await the horses at his house; nay, he wondered at his own want of courage in not doing so, and it was with great pain that he could not help owning to himself, that had the lady, so circumstanced, being any one but Lady Helena Fortescue, he would have conducted her thither instantly; but he knew

his mother, and he feared that if he thus forced Lady Helena upon her, that her reception of her would be such a one as he dared not risk; he knew her suspicious nature on this subject, and he was very sure that she would suspect Lady Helena of having contrived the circumstances, in order to throw herself in his way; and, perhaps, she might also believe he was a party to the contrivance.

As these disagreeable reflections were passing in his mind, Lord Restormel was silent, and his look disturbed, and Lady Helena, who, as his eyes were fixed on the ground, could venture to look at him, saw his embarrassment, and suspected the cause. Pride now resumed its ascendancy, and she felt she ought not to be walking thus with a man, who, though the friend of her brother, and also known to herself, dared not invite her to his house, under circumstances which required this common civility from him. Accordingly, she said with an air of pique, which she vainly endeavoured to conceal—"I beg, my lord,

I may not detain you from your ride; I hope you do not think there can be any necessity for your staying with me?"

"Necessity! perhaps not," he eagerly replied; "but when you are thus so unexpectedly thrown in my way, no consideration shall force me to relinquish the happiness of being with you till I can be with you no longer."

Lady Helena was wounded, though pleased with this speech!—'As she *was thrown in his way,*' he would not leave her. It was evident, therefore, that he would never seek her; and wherefore not? because as she had often been told she was under the ban of his mother. But did not his heart resist his mother's will, and would she not be justified in endeavouring, by exciting all her powers of charming, to make that heart still more rebellious. The temptation was a strong one, but Lady Helena resisted it; she assumed a cold and distant manner; she walked with folded arms, lest he should offer her his arm, and though she certainly was not studiously disagree-

able, the usual playful charm of her manner had disappeared; the smile of fascination, the evident wish to please irradiated her countenance no more. No, thought Lady Helena, that proud, severe woman shall know I am as proud as she is, and would enter no family unless my entrance into it was solicited, or considered as a favor by every one in it; I will not condescend to charm the son of Lady Restormel. But had Lady Helena intended to do so, she could not have taken more effectual means; for he saw the secret pride, the lofty disdain which gave new dignity to her carriage and her step; and, as he suspected the cause, he could not but own that Lady Helena's resentment proved her to possess the self-respect becoming her rank in life, and her conscious superiority in mind and endowments. But what can I say to her? thought he; would I could apologize for not inviting her to Green Hills?—yet that would be worse still; perhaps she does not know that house is mine, yet to conceal it

from her would be very mean—I must name it to her at all risks.

Lady Helena, meanwhile, was on her side vainly trying to summon up resolution to mention Green Hills to him; for would it not look like wishing to be invited thither?

Lord Restormel, however, had, at last, courage to say, "That is Green Hills—my mother's seat."

"So I am told," she replied; "and it seems a beautiful place."

"It is so, and I wish—" here he paused; and Lady Helena making a great effort, looked at him steadily, as she replied, "Wish what, my lord?"

"That you could see it, and give me your opinion of Lady Restormel's improvements."

"As I never saw the place before it was altered, how could I judge of its improvements?" she coldly replied.

"True, still I earnestly wish I could—"

She had not courage to say, "Could

what my lord?" for she feared he was going to be more explicit than she liked, in giving his reasons for not inviting her, and she hastened forward in order to interrupt him, exclaiming—"Oh, what a pretty reed house that is before us; what a fine view it must command."

"That belongs to us," he replied, "and I have the key of the gate that leads to it in my pocket; pray let me have the honor of conducting you to it."

"Oh, no, my lord, I expect the carriage every moment now."

"Look! we can see the road for some distance, but there is no carriage."

"Well, if it must be so!"—and he conducted her to the reed house.

"This is most fortunate," cried he, "I was wishing that some one of undoubted taste would tell me where to leave trees for effect, and where to cut them down here; and if your ladyship would condescend to—"

"My lord, I can give you no opinion," cried Lady Helena, hastily, "concerning

aught belonging to another—I cannot, I cannot, indeed—do not ask me."

"If you will not deign to oblige me," replied he, dejectedly, "but it would have been so pleasant to have been able to say, 'Lady Helena Fortescue suggested this improvement—she pointed out that!'"

"And to whom, my lord, would you have said this?" exclaimed she, with astonishment.

"To myself; to no one else, believe me; it would have been a dear, a cherished gratification—one too sacred to have been whispered to any one else."

Lady Helena was disappointed, though pleased; she hoped he meant to say so to his mother, and that it proved she was not as obnoxious to that lady as she thought herself; but as she felt that if Lord Restormel continued to look and talk thus, she could not retain her cold dignity of manner, she rose from her seat, and expressed the utmost impatience for the arrival of the chaise, and her determination to go and meet it on the road.

Lord Restormel was now wounded in his turn; he had, he knew, been betrayed by his feelings into too warm an expression of them; still what he had said had been so respectful that she needed not to have been hurried away by it; but he evidently was annoyed, and rising also, she coldly said, "Certainly, they make you wait a long time for horses; if it be your pleasure we will walk towards the inn."

"We!—pray, my lord, pursue your ride; I fear you have already staid with me too long."

"I have, indeed, Lady Helena, if you think I have; but I do not wish to force my company on any one."

"Lord Restormel!"

"Lady Helena! you are offended."

"No; hurt, not offended."

"You wish to get rid of me!"

"No indeed; I do not."

"Then may I stay to hand you into your carriage; surely, you can bear with my tediousness till that moment comes,

for, alas, it is very near—the carriage is in sight."

"To be sure I can," she replied, smiling, in spite of herself; and presuming on that smile, he timidly offered her his arm; she could not refuse it, and he purposely stopt her every now and then to point out prospects and objects to her, in order to retard her entrance into the carriage, which was now rapidly approaching. Lady Helena, now the time of their separation drew so near, felt the kindness of her feelings towards her companion increase every moment; she feared she had been unjust, repulsive, disdainful—and she could not help trying to crowd into the few moments which she had still to pass with him, something more pleasing to his feelings, and more creditable to her own. At length she said, with her usual gracious smile and manners, "What neglectful, cold-hearted friends we are, not once to have mentioned Marcus or Julia during all the time we have been together."

"All the time has been so very short a

time, that I hope the neglect is excusable; but make it longer, and in order to make amends for the neglect, we will discuss them and their affairs at full length."

"Impossible!—I must go; but do tell me what you think of the probability of their being united?"

"That it is very great, and that they ought to marry; I am sure Fortescue loves Miss Villeroy more than he is conscious of, and I suspect that he is still master of her affections."

"Why then should they not marry?—he may never see that dangerous woman again, and when friends on both sides approve, when there is no opposing circumstance, no obstacle whatever, I cannot bear that a weakness of which a man, like Fortescue, ought to be ashamed, should prevent a union which seems to promise so much happiness; oh, how enviable they are, if they did but know it."

"Enviable, indeed!" said Lady Helena; "well, then you bid me hope that they will be married at last—quick, quick!

here is the chaise, give me all the hope you can."

"How unseasonable! to expect me to give you hope in return for the despair you are giving me by hastening away thus."

"I must go, I am impatient to get my trial over; nay, then I must get in without your aid."

"Not for the world."

"Now, then, no more parleying;—good by Lord Restormel."

"Stop!—what trial awaits you?"

"A father's just displeasure and reproof; you know I ran away t'other day, and I am now going home for the first time; and, indeed, I fear to encounter my father's frowns, for I know I deserve them; how shall I disarm them?"

"Only look at him."

Lady Helena did not dare to meet the full force of Lord Restormel's look as he said this; but kissing her hand to him, without raising her eyes entirely to his, she bade the postilion drive on; then

throwing herself back in the chaise, she closed her eyes, that she might see Lord Restormel still—see nothing but him and the parting look he gave her.

CHAP. XI.

Lord Restormel could distinguish the chaise that bore Lady Helena away no longer, though he rode after it to some considerable distance; he turned towards Green Hills, and alighting at the reed house, dismissed his horses and servant. What new and delightful recollections now awaited him there! There he had seen Lady Helena Fortescue seated, and she had admired the scene! she had pronounced it beautiful! True, it would have been more delighful to him had she pointed out improvements which he could now hasten to make, but there was a becoming delicacy in her refusal to do so, on which his memory dwelt with more than equal pleasure; for to a man like him it was even more gratifying to dwell on a moral beauty in the woman he admired, than on any kind of personal at-

traction. On such a charm it is also more wise to dwell, as the latter carries in it the seeds of growing decay, and the former of still encreasing durability. But while he was engrossed in these pleasing recollections, his mother's frowning image forced itself on his mind, and substituted a painful for pleasing consciousness. Could he dare to tell her that Lady Helena Fortescue had been with him where he then was? that twice in one hour chance had brought them together that day? Yet, how mean, how disingenuous it would be in him not to tell her this? He must, and he would inform her of all that had passed, at all risks, and however painful it might be to do so. On this he was resolved, and for fear she should hear of it from any one else, he would tell her all as soon as ever he saw her; and he saw her sooner than he expected, for she suddenly entered the reed house, and exclaiming, with wonder, at his being returned from his ride so soon; she then seated herself by him, but though he had previously resolved to say—"Oh! you

little think who was with me in the reed house this morning! he could not prevail on himself to mention that, or any other subject; but he sat in uncomfortable and restless silence!"

"What is the matter, Charles?" exclaimed his observant mother, "you are strangely absent to-day! have you met with any thing in your walks or rides to disturb you?"

"Not to disturb me—no, certainly not," was his embarrassed answer;—and there he stopped, saying to himself, "I will tell her presently."

Lady Restormel looked earnestly at him, and seeing that his cheek was flushed, and that his countenance had a peculiar expression, she exclaimed—"I am sure something unusual has occurred—had you any letters to-day?"

"Yes, one, but it was of no consequence, none at all." Then, in order to divert his mother's attention from himself, and give him the time which he fancied necessary to enable him to make the

formidable disclosure, he pointed out to her peculiar notice the view to the left, and the beautiful catching lights on a tower at a distance. Lady Restormel looked that way—but she did not see, she saw nothing but with her mental eye, and that still beheld her son's absent perturbed expression—she heard nothing but his unsatisfactory answers. It would have been well for Lord Restormel if her bodily eye had continued thus blind—but while again turning to study his countenance, she saw something glittering at the foot of a sweet-briar bush, beside the reed house, and exclaiming—"What shining thing is that! she eagerly stooped down before her son could prevent her, and took up a brooch of hair with a diamond cypher on it!—that cypher was M. F.

"Whose brooch is this," cried Lady Restormel, "and how could it possibly be dropt here?"

"Oh!" replied Lord Restormel, "I had no idea it was there! forcing a laugh,

and looking very silly; but I was going to tell you when—"

"Going to tell me, were you?" said his mother with a tone of indignant sarcasm. "Admirable, though tardy, ingenuousness! but what do I see engraven on the reverse? 'Marcus Fortescue to his beloved sister, Helena Fortescue!' Answered me, sir," she continued, her whole frame trembling with indignation—"has Lady Helena Fortescue been here?" Her manner restored Lord Restormel to his self-possession, and he coolly replied—

"She has, and has not been gone above an hour."

"And are you not ashamed to own it, for your own sake as well as her's? what should she do here? Oh! heaven!" she cried, clasping her hands convulsively, "is it possible that my son should be carrying on a clandestine intercourse with the only woman on earth that his mother dislikes, and wishes him to avoid? Speak, my lord! on your duty I command you to explain!"

"I will, when you are calm, madam."

"I cannot be calm—why thus put the finishing stroke to her effrontery! to meet a man on his own premises! not even to have the decency to insist on his coming to her's; I cannot stay here, the place is become odious to me!"

Here she rushed from the reed house, and in such agony as her son would at any other time have beheld with tender alarm. She threw herself on a bank that was near, but starting up again, she exclaimed—"But, perhaps, she has been here also?"

"I fear not," said Lord Restormel, folding his arms, and looking at her, with no pleasant expression of countenance, "fear not! I have said it, I should have loved that bank still better had it been so honoured by Lady Helena Fortescue!"

This was too much, tears and sobs of the most violent nature now burst from the labouring bosom of his mother, and agitated to a very painful degree the heart

of Lord Restormel, and the more so, because he felt that this suffering was all occasioned by his want of resolution, a weakness which had not only painfully shaken the nerves of Lady Restormel, but had also exposed Lady Helena to unjust suspicion. While this was passing in his mind, he still remained silent, feeling the more unable to speak, the more he felt the necessity of speaking; but at length he with great difficulty said—"Indeed, dear mother! I earnestly regret that my folly has exposed you to this agitation."

"Folly! then you own it to be folly!" she faintly articulated,—"but, oh! the greater pang still is occasioned by your breach of promise, and your dishonorable disingenuousness."

"I am sorry, madam, you know so little of your son, as to suppose him capable of either. Really, were it not for the duty which I owe an innocent and injured lady, I should be too proud to exculpate myself."

"An innocent and injured lady!—to

call a girl innocent, who meets a man in a reed house on his mother's grounds; that mother a stranger to her also!"

"Lady Helena did not meet me here—I saw her by accident walking on the road, and prevailed on her to visit the spot she so much admired."

"But she consented; what decent woman would have done that?"

"Not when her attendant was in sight all the time?"

Lady Restormel was silent, and Lord Restormel went on to describe his two rencontres with Lady Helena that morning; but there was so much confusion in his manner, such a faltering in his voice, and he felt evidently such strong interest in his narration, such eagerness to exculpate Lady Helena from blame, that he only made her more odious and formidable to his apprehensive parent; and when he said Lady Helena sat on the seat, and declared the view was most beautiful just there, Lady Restormel started from the bank, and hastening out of sight of the building,

declared, that to her all pleasure in it was now destroyed for ever, and that she had a great mind to take the reed house down!

"Not spoken or felt like Lady Restormel," indignantly exclaimed her son—"and for the first time in my life I am ashamed of my mother!"

"It will not tend to reconcile me to your paragon, my lord, that she has occasioned the only harsh and cruel word, the only reproof I ever heard from the lips of my son!"

Tears more in sorrow than in anger now burst from the eyes of his mother, and Lord Restormel could not behold them unmoved.

"Forgive me!" he eagerly exclaimed, "and do me the justice to listen patiently and candidly to what I have further to say."

When he had ended his explanation, even Lady Restormel could not blame, she could only lament what had passed between him and Lady Helena; but there

was one thing could not be explained away, that was, his evident confusion, absence of mind, and unwillingness to disclose what had passed; and the painful conviction which this occasioned her, it was not in her son's power to remove. True, his answer was ready, and it was sincere also—"But why, Restormel, did you not tell me all this the moment you saw me! why put it in the power of chance to make the discovery and agitate me thus?"

"Because I could not utter it."

"And why could you not?"

"Because I knew it would vex and agitate you, and make you suspicious."

"What! suspicious without any cause? as you have related the story, both the meetings were wholly unpremeditated, and as short as possible."

"They were so; but had the lady been any other than Lady Helena Fortescue, I should have insisted on presenting her to my mother, and shewing her Green Hills. This you know I could not do."

"And had it been any one else you would, I conclude, have instantly told me of the rencontre."

"Certainly; but knowing your prejudices and your suspicions, I felt a reluctance which I could not immediately conquer."

"Suspicious again! what should I suspect? answer me that?"

"That I felt; that I admired; that—"

"Oh, Charles! say no more, I cannot bear the subject! let us drop it, and never let us talk again of Lady Helena Fortescue, she has been the cause of our first quarrel, but I fear it may not be our last on her account; however, I rely on the promise you gave me."

"Which I have kept faithfully, and will ever keep."

"I believe you, still; but no matter now, let us talk of something else."

They did so; but, as I before observed, the remembrance of Lord Restormel's avowed incapability of naming his rencontres with Lady Helena, and of his em-

barrassment while doing so, haunted her whatsoever she said or did, and though resolved to banish the images from her thoughts, they were continually recurring to them.

"By the by," said she, suddenly stopping in her walk, "what have you done with that brooch?"

"It is in my pocket."

"And what do you mean to do with it?"

"Send it off express to its owner, to be sure!"

"But how could she contrive to drop it; perhaps she did not mean it should be returned—she would be better pleased if you were to keep it."

"Lady Restormel, such suspicions are unworthy of you!"

"Again, my lord, how I hate this girl!"

Lord Restormel darting an indignant glance at his mother, for the first time in his life, now left her silently and abruptly. 'I am wrong, unjust, impolitic; I know I

am," said she to herself, " but I am miserable, for I clearly perceive that my son has not seen this dangerous girl with impunity; for her sake he has dared to reprove me!" Lord Restormel was not absent long, his heart smote him for the anger against a parent into which he had been betrayed, and having dispatched a messenger with the brooch, enclosed in a paper, on which he simply wrote—" With Lord Restormel's compliments!" he returned to his mother, and seeing her in tears, he drew her arm under his, which he affectionately pressed as he did so, and silently, though not sullenly, they walked towards the house. Fortunately they had company to dinner that day, and by the next morning the painful occurrences of the preceding morning seemed to be forgotten both by the mother and the son;—but were they so? no; Lord Restormel remembered Lady Helena's propriety of conduct, as well as her beauty, during her short stay with him, and he felt her endeared to him the more by the cruel in-

justice which his mother had done her; while Lady Restormel, when she recalled all that had passed, gave credit, spite of her wishes, to the accuracy of the relator, and was ashamed and sorry for the violent indulgence of her feelings into which she had been betrayed, for she was conscious that resentment of the wrong she had done Lady Helena, would endear her the more to Lord Restormel. When Lord Erpingham beheld his offending child, his reproof was severe as well as just; though the tears which Lady Helena shed, softened his heart at length into forgiving tenderness. She found that her mother and Lord Aston were gone to the pavilion, but would probably return again directly, as the wind had changed from a mild to a cold quarter; but, to make her amends for her disappointment, Lord Erpingham said he would introduce her to his new housekeeper; then throwing open the door of the inner drawing-room, Lady Helena's delighted eyes beheld Miss Brightwen!

"Now, Miss Brightwen," cried the

earl, "to you I delegate my authority, and my right to reprove this rebellious girl! you know that she feels and fears the power of your eye, and I only hope that you will keep its power exclusively for her, as it must serve her, but might injure me."

"What! gallant to Miss Brightwen already, papa!" said Lady Helena, "oh fie, and after I had so resolutely asserted, that you would never make mamma jealous even of her?"

"What do you mean, Helena?"

"I will tell you."

"Lady Helena," said Sir George Villeroy to me when we were alone, "what do you think of the dismissal of Miss Brightwen;—is it not a very silly business?"

"Very; because no one can believe that you can no longer afford to pay Miss Brightwen's salary."

"No, to be sure not, but that was not the true reason."

"Then what was?—and here, papa,

your old friend looked so silly, that I really felt for him, while he replied that the truth was, Lady Villeroy was apt to be jealous; she knew his admiration of pretty women, and she had fancied she had seen certain looks and attentions, which made her resolve never to admit so dangerous a woman into her family again."

"Lady Helena, you are joking!" cried the blushing Sophia.

"No, indeed, I am not; and I am not sure that Lady Villeroy was not right, for I have seen certain squeezes of the hand, and heard such a parting salute! and then the contrast between her age and your youth! your 'milk of human kindness, and her gall and bitterness!'"

"True, Helena, I rejoice that my old friend is now safe from such dangers, even though his safety may be my destruction."

"Again, papa! and after what I said."

"But what did you say?"

"Why, I hoped that Miss Brightwen would live with us in future, as I knew

mamma would not be jealous, for that you were not such a Lothario as he was; and, would you believe it, papa, I saw that Sir George was flattered, and not offended at his wife's suspicions of him, and at my remark; nay more, that wishing to save the expense of a governess, she had artfully pretended the jealousy she did not feel, in order to please the poor old soul's vanity, and carry her point."

"Is it possible?" cried Sophia.

"It is certain; and what a Lothario! an emaciated figure, the mere wreck of a very fine person, and both hands and one leg swathed in flannels! while the only finger that was visible was furnished with a chalk-stone, which might have saved Lady Villeroy the expense of buying chalk for the servants to keep their milk-tally with."

"Helena, Helena! have mercy on the poor baronet's infirmities!"

"But, dear papa, I am only bringing his bodily to illustrate his mental infirmity; now was it not lamentable to see that a being so grievously afflicted in body, could

be so weak in mind as to fancy that his wife could be jealous of him?"

"Yes, it was very possible that he should believe so, she might be jealous of Miss Brightwen's mental superiority and attractions."

"But then, why be jealous of certain looks? and, I assure you, Sir George talked of looks, papa; and when I vouched for your correctness of conduct, and that I believed not even naughty Miss Brightwen could corrupt you, Sir George said, you were always a pattern of propriety, and that you were nick-named Sir Charles Grandison—but that *he,* though he admired, could never imitate you. And why not," cried I, pertly enough, "if you had really admired and wished to follow such an example?"

"And what did he say to that?"

"Why, he looked oddly, and laughed; and in short, papa, I saw very clearly that he was pleased to be thought unworthy to be trusted in the same house with a Sophia Brightwen, and that in de-

claring she believed him a gay deceiver, and what I should call a profligate; Lady Villeroy knew she was paying court to him, and I, sick and sorry at heart, began to moralize, though not allowed, like the melancholy Jaques."

"And, pray what thought my moralizing daughter?"

"Why, I wondered how old a man must be before he can be secure from being the dupe of an artful woman, and a dupe on the score of vanity too?"

"I will endeavour to guess, Helena, if you will tell me at what age a woman is secure from being the dupe of an artful man, and on the score of vanity too?"

"I fear," replied Lady Helena, shaking her head, "that our respective questions must remain unanswered till the philosopher's stone is found; and now, my newly-acquired treasure, I beg to see you alone in my dressing-room."

The next day the brooch (which Gibbs but not Lady Helena had missed) arrived in safety, with Lord Restormel's compli-

ments on the direction: perhaps Lady Helena was disappointed, but she did not own it even to Sophia; however, the piece of his hand-writing was carefully locked up. She then wrote to Julia, giving an account of her journey, and of her delight at seeing Miss Brightwen; she concluded thus:—"Our friend looks very pale and very thin, but prettier than ever: how anxiously she enquired after you, and how rejoiced she was to hear the account I had to give her of your marvellous self-command! marvellous is the only term I can use when thinking of it. I declare to you, Julia, it almost deceived me, and made me think you had really conquered your attachment to Marcus; true, your eye was downcast, but then so it always is; there is the advantage of an habitually modest countenance; I could never so disguise my feelings; a downcast eye would really be the most immodest thing possible in me, it would tell every one when I was in the presence of the beloved object, how much in love I was.—Heigh ho!

we expect mamma and Aston to-morrow, and then I, who am always in extremes you know, am going the next day to commit an act of penance, and a work of supererrogation both in one. I find that I mortified and hurt those good, tiresome souls the Magnals, by going away during their visit, and have, therefore, written to invite myself to stay two days with them after I have seen Aston and mamma; they receive me, and papa commends me.—Write fully to me, dearest girl, often, or I shall be jealous of Miss Brightwen."

The next day she wrote as follows:—

"I tell you what Julia, I am resolved to turn author and write novels—what with my own adventures in a stage-coach! and those of other persons well known to me, I have already materials sufficient—only '*le vrai n'est pas toujours le vrai semblable,*' and I have such a romantic and improbable incident to relate! *en attendant,* let me warn you to expect to see advertised, Romantic Incidents! a tale, in two volumes, by a lady of high distinction.

Now for my story:—but to make you believe it possible, I must premise, that my father has not been Earl of Erpingham more than twenty years, that he was originally Lord Stanmore, that Aston's name is not Fortescue, though ours is, as he bore the name of Elmont from his birth, being heir to the estates of his godfather, Mr. Elmont, and was to bear his name. Now, Julia, keeping this in mind, let me beg you to figure me to yourself leading Aston into the drawing-room, when I could bear to forego the dear *tête-a-tête* I had had with this beloved brother, and telling him I would now shew him the new treasure our family had lately acquired, presenting him, at the same moment, to Miss Brightwen. When I said 'Lord Aston,' Sophia's countenance remained unmoved, and she smiled and curtsied with her usual sweetness and grace; but Aston no sooner heard me say 'Miss Brightwen!' than, starting and turning pale, he darted on her penetrating and enquiring glances, and, seizing

my arm, exclaimed—'Brightwen! what Brightwen, and is her name Sophia?' 'My name is Sophia,' she replied, looking as much surprised as I was. Aston then, after an earnest and agitated survey of her features, grasped her hand, heaved a deep sigh, and suddenly quitted the room; I followed him, conjecturing that our friend's name and herself were connected with a dreadful affliction in poor Aston's life, and one which he has never entirely overcome. I was right in my conjectures, for thus it was:—Miss Brightwen's mother was a widow, with one son, the delight of every one who knew him, and more especially of his half-sister, Sophia, and of his father-in-law, who really doted on him. Edward Everard possessed an independent fortune, and at the age of two and twenty he went abroad, where he became intimately acquainted with my brother, then called the Honorable Augustus Elmont, the son of Lord Stanmore. These young men were soon inseparable, and Sophia Brightwen was as well known

by character to my brother as to her own; nay, by face also, for Mr. Everard had her picture, and Augustus, a romantic youth of twenty, took in something like love at his eyes from her looks, and in his ears from hearing her letters read—at least I conjecture this, and not without reason. Well, two years passed on happily to the friends, when Augustus became the object of jealously to a Neapolitan nobleman, and with the thoughtlessness of presumptuous youth, scorned the menaces which he knew were uttered against him. In vain did his wise and pious friend tell him that the appearance of evil was sinful, and that as he seemed in the eyes of the world, and especially of the offended husband, to be carrying on a criminal pursuit, he ought to quit the place, and never see the lady more. Pride made him persevere, for he could not, he said, bear to have it thought that fear of consequences could influence his conduct, and persevere he did; the consequence was a challenge—the place the sea-shore—the time midnight—the light

that of the moon; in vain did Everard try to obtain leave to negociate a reconciliation with the offended husband—in vain reprobate the wicked practice of duelling; all, therefore, he could then do, he did—he accompanied Augustus to the place of rendezvous. My heart bleeds while going on, but go on I must. The marquis came apparently alone; therefore, Everard was obliged to retire, after having tried in vain to prevent the combat. They fought, and the marquis fell; but scarcely was he on the ground, when three men hitherto unseen, but no doubt prepared by him, rushed forward, and while one of them bore the marquis away, the others stabbed Augustus with their stilettos, then, before Everard could prevent them, they raised him between them and flung him into the sea—one of them having previously wounded Everard in the arm. They then disappeared and left Everard at liberty to follow the impulse of his noble heart; he plunged, therefore, into the sea, which at that place was full and deep; swam,

spite of his wounded arm, after the body of my brother, and at length caught hold of it, when with inconceivable difficulty he had nearly dragged it to shore; a boat filled with revellers, amongst whom was poor Everard's servant, appeared in sight, and they beheld by the light of the moon on the water one man floating as if dead, upheld by one who was evidently near sinking; but Everard's now fast-closing eye, saw that a chance of life for his friend, at least, was at hand, and Everard struggled a few moments longer till the boat had reached him, when Richard with a scream of agony recognised his master and Augustus! In another moment my brother was in the boat, and when they again turned to take up his generous friend, they saw him no more; he had sunk, had gone under the boat, and all with him was over on earth! He had died the victim of friendship and disinterested humanity. The body was not found for days after; but Augustus was saved! he recovered for his wounds,

though many, were not mortal. But what a recovery was his, when the whole truth which his friend's servant told him in all its sad details was presented to his view; months of illness and of sorrow succeeded; months of delirious anguish, during which time he was an object of interest and anxiety to many, and the marquis when he recovered was forced to quit Naples; but Aston was most indebted for kindness and care to a widow lady older than himself, who lived in the same hotel with him, and who nursed him with a sister's affectionate attention. Meanwhile, Mr. Brightwen on receiving the sad tidings was so excessively distressed as well as the mother of Everard, that they both declared they never could bear to see my brother, or to hold any intercourse with him; and they agreed never to ask any information relating to the affecting circumstance; but though it was a subject forbidden, it never ceased to be dearly remembered, and the poor mother at length sunk under her grief. Lord Stanmore, therefore, and his son, were objects

neither of interest nor curiosity to the Brightwens; but, on the contrary, they avoided the slightest remembrance of either; consequently, they knew not that the one was become Earl of Erpingham, and the other Lord Aston. My father, meanwhile, concluded that Everard's father bore the same name as himself, suspected not that the Mr. Brightwen at whose house in Norfolk he was so hospitably entertained some years after, was the father of the youth, who had given his life to save that of his son! nor had Mr. Brightwen the slightest suspicion that the nobleman whom chance had led to his house was the father of him who had deprived him of one of the beings dearest to him on earth. But to the ear of poor Aston the name of Brightwen was tenderly and awfully familiar—and till gratitude led him to repay Mrs. Scroope's evident love and affectionate and watchful nursing by the offer of his hand, Aston had cherished in his heart the image of his Sophia, and an earnest wish to see, and perhaps to woo

her, if she could endure the sight of one who had caused the death of her brother! Judge then what must have been his feelings when I presented him to her? Judge, also, what her's must have been when she found that she had beheld in my brother the being so long to her an object of abhorrence, however unintentionally the injury he had done her! But I was not prepared for the effect which this knowledge had on her in one respect! I was hurt beyond expression when I heard her declare, and with a wildness that startled me, that she could not stay a moment under the same roof with the destroyer of her beloved Edward! at first I was shocked and speechless, but I did not long remain so, as I felt, that for the first time, and probably the last, I had the vantage ground of Miss Brightwen; and firmly, but tenderly, I told her, that I did not expect injustice, and its consequences, ungenerous actions from her; nor did I expect to see her at once forfeit her long acknowledged claims to respect on the ground of her un-

common self-command and well-regulated feelings. This expostulation produced a good effect immediately—she struggled violently with herself, burst into tears, and begged me to forgive whatever she had uttered in the first violence of her emotions. When she became more calm, I told her that Aston had suffered more from the results of a calamity of which he had been the unintentional cause, than most persons from the evil actions which they had intentionally performed: that his health and his spirits had been utterly destroyed by the sorrow which he had experienced, and the memory of her brother was even yet green in his soul.—'No wonder,' she exclaimed, 'so it must be in that of every one who knew him—and in his; but indeed, indeed, I pity Lord Aston, though I cannot, cannot see him!' 'Not see him, whom your brother loved as his own soul! he for whom he risked his life, and, I doubt not, was contented to loose it!' she remained silent, and shuddered violently; 'would your beloved Everard be

pleased at such a decision?—would it not soothe his spirit, if it could be hovering over you, to see himself the bond of union between the two beings he loved so very dearly, and to know that you bewailed his loss together with sympathizing tears?' still she was silent. At this moment my mother entered the room, with her face disfigured with excessive weeping:—'Helena!' said she, 'your poor brother asks for you? Miss Brightwen, the sight of you has opened all my sons anguish afresh, and I never saw him so wretched.' 'Then let me go away directly,' cried Sophia, starting up. 'No,' replied I, taking her hand, 'it is a justice due to poor Augustus, after all he has suffered, to see him before you go, and soothe him with a word of kindness. Any other conduct were unworthy of Miss Brightwen—unworthy of her whom I have hitherto been proud to look up to as an example of Christian energy and Christian resignation.' 'You are right, Lady Helena,' she meekly replied, 'only leave me to myself for an

hour, and then do with me as you please.' I then led her to her own chamber, left her, and hastened to my poor brother, who was, I found, comforted by the idea of seeing her, and with the faint hope that she would, in time, feel a mournful pleasure in his company. At the end of an hour she sent for me, and said she would see Lord Aston, if I desired it; but he was too unwell then to bear the interview. To-morrow, he means to see her. The rest of the evening has been passed in explaining the almost improbable concurrence of circumstances which had made us remain in ignorance of the claims which Miss Brightwen and her family have upon ours; claims which, in the day of their distress, we should have eagerly and thankfully acknowledged. I cannot find words to express to you Aston's excessive agony, when he heard what difficulties Sophia had undergone, and to think that she, whom unknown, he had almost adored, should also have experienced pecuniary hardships, and have been forced to work for her bread—

the thought was frenzy!—then to find her, too, a sort of dependant in his own family; but dependant she should, he said, be no longer—that he was determined upon. In short, the consequence of this trying scene will be, I trust, a happy one in some respects. But Lord Erpingham, not Lord Aston, must make Sophia Brightwen independent; Lord Aston may assist the father, but you and I know, Julia, that Sophia would not accept pecuniary favors from a young man, if, indeed, she accepts them at all; but whether she does or no she must, in future, feel that her residence under our roof is a favor done to us. It enables us to repay a small portion of the debt of gratitude, which we owe to the memory of Edward Everard. Aston says she is so like her brother, and so like her own picture. Poor fellow! I wish him safe back again with his disagreeable wife. I will now send this letter off, and write to you again, when the interview is over. Show or send this letter to Marcus."

The next day Lady Helena wrote as follows:

"Our prospect brightens! The meeting went off to admiration, and I see that Aston was right in thinking that, in time, Miss Brightwen would have a melancholy pleasure in being with him; all I now fear is, that he will have too lively a pleasure in being with her. He gazes on her so intently, and so fondly; she says, 'Poor man! I see that he compares my features with those indelibly impressed on his 'memory.' That may be true; but in the meanwhile I fear that the former may become indelibly impressed on his heart. My mother, who thinks Aston incapable of any human weakness, has built a very pretty frabric on a foundation suggested by Aston. He has heard us all extol Miss Brightwen's power in forming the female mind for a woman's best and dearest duties, by instilling Christian principles, and he exclaimed—'Oh, that she could or would live with us, and educate Everard and Edwardina!' (for so they are christened

after poor Mr. Everard). 'Why should he not?' cried my mother eagerly. 'But do you think she would?' he replied; 'then you know I could, without any difficulty, offer her an independence.' My mother told him she would feel his way for him, and she wishes my father and her father to have a meeting. I find Mr. Brightwen is *living* in one of the Midland counties, and she thinks that if my father could reconcile him to the idea of his daughter residing under the roof of the man who was the cause of his son-in-law's death, that then Sophia's scruples would cease, provided she has any, and provided, which I think would be very likely, her only objection would be founded on his probable aversion to such a plan. She is at this moment mentioning the subject to Sophia; but, I am sure this plan will be relinquished very soon, for I know Aston. I do not think with my mother, that Aston is incapable of human weakness, but I do think and know that he is capable of struggling with and rising superior to it; time will

discover whether I am right or no. More changes since I wrote yesterday; my mother and Aston are going for a month to Hastings, because it is warmer there than at the pavilion, and my mother's apprehensive tenderness, fancies Aston worse though every one else think him better; she wishes him to be with her alone, because she sees that he is often agitated when with Sophia. Papa is going to see Mr. Brightwen, and, as I suspect, to find out if he can be of any service to him. When he returns, Miss Brightwen and myself are to go with him to Hastings. While in Derbyshire he means to pay one or two visits, therefore his return is uncertain. They set off on their different journies next week. I thank you for your letter; but I wish you would complain a little and murmur at your lot. What a dull and trying life you are now leading. Marcus is, however, a comfort to you, I hope; he writes to me in such raptures of your meek and uncomplaining spirit, and I really believe the patient

sweetness with which you endure the joyless tenor of your existence, and the pain inflicted by the crossness of your maratre, have forged for the poor man's heart a stronger fetter than your beauty and your talents ever did; for the one was snapped as soon as made, the other, I believe, will last for life; but I may be mistaken, therefore I am glad to see by your letters, that you continue to regard Marcus only as a friend, and as likely to remain so. I have been to the Magnals, and I trust that I behaved very prettily on the whole; to be sure I was once wicked enough to own to the old lady that I was a friend to reading and writing, and thought that an educated population was more likely to know wrong from right than an ignorant one; and I gently insinuated a fear to the old gentleman, that his descent from Charlemagne was not quite made out in a direct line, for that I had heard the reputation of his great, great, great, great-grandmother was not quite *intact*, which heresy if I had

been a man, would certainly have cost me my life, or the risk of it at least in a duel, with slugs in a saw-pit; for the tone in which he said, 'Lady Helena, give me leave to tell you,' was one of fierce defiance, till his wife saw the corners of my mouth work with ill-suppressed laughter, and exclaimed—'my dear Heronimus! do you not see that Lady Helena is only joking with you;' but, 'pon honor, Julia, this was the very height and front of my offending; in the whole two days I passed there, and I was called kind, and sweet, and delightful, and good, till I began to believe I was so: yes, *good* was their word—no, I can't be good, because I am not happy! But why am I not happy? I do not exactly know—oh yes, I do, but I will not tell why. Cannot you guess, Julia? Promise me you will never go in a stage-coach again as long as you live. I never will, I assure you; the remembrance of my journey in one, will, I fear, last through my life.'"

I shall now give an extract from one of Julia's letters.

" What shall I do, dearest Lady Helena ? Captain Fortescue is here every day, and for hours at a time ! and he has resumed that manner which I once thought meant so much ! I now never dare, never can raise my eyes to his ; and I do assure you, that I rejoice in papa's having permitted Lord Clanross to visit here, because it gives me an opportunity of dividing my attention ; and, as I have begged papa to tell him he has nothing to expect, I hope that coming will do him no harm ; papa thinks him so handsome, and Lady Villeroy says he is quite an Adonis ; and she praises him so much ! but I think sometimes she does it to vex me, because she knows I prefer your brother ; yet it is very uncandid in me to think this ;—would Miss Brightwen were here ! I am so afraid of betraying the weakness of my heart ! so afraid he should despise me for it ! but, how selfish I am ; how unkind not to

tell you sooner what will interest you so much more!—Lord Restormel has been here; he called alone, and I saw him alone; he came very early, he said, in hopes of finding me at home; your last letter came in while he was with me;—from dear Lady Helena, cried I; he blushed excessively, and tried to look unembarrassed, but could not. 'I hope she is well!' said he, in a hoarse voice, and blowing his nose as if to hide his emotion. 'Oh, quite well!' I replied, 'but she has been very anxious—' 'Anxious! is Lord Aston worse?' 'No, but his feelings have been much tried lately;' and then I could not help shewing him your interesting letter on that subject, even though there was at the beginning and end of it an allusion to adventures in stage-coaches. It seemed to me, that for some time, he read and saw nothing but those words, and read them over and over again, for he was a long time before he turned over the leaf, and then, as if not able to think of any thing but you, he said, 'Did Lady

Helena tell you of our rencontre on the road?' 'She did.' 'And did she not say she thought it very odd, that, being so near my mother's house, I did not ask her to stop and take some refreshment?' 'No,' said I, 'she did not, but, as I believe, she is aware that she is no favourite with Lady Restormel, she could not wonder at your not asking her to the house; and it is very certain if you had, my lord, that she would have refused your invitation.' 'Miss Villeroy,' said he, in great confusion, 'are you not aware that my mother never saw Lady Helena, except across a theatre, how then should she—' here he paused, unable to proceed with what he knew was a falsehood. 'Lady Restormel's prejudice against my friend, is a sufficient proof that she does not know her,' said I, 'and Captain Fortescue himself informed both me and his sister, that Lady Restormel had spoken unkindly of her.' 'Well, madam, well! I cannot consistently, with truth, deny this; therefore, as it is a most painful subject to me, I must beg

leave to drop it, assuring you that the son shares not the feelings of his mother on this point.' 'I see that very clearly,' replied I, with great simplicity, and forgetting myself entirely. 'Miss Villeroy, what do you see?' cried he, changing colour. I was then embarrassed in my turn, and with difficulty replied, 'I see, that is, I see you do my friend more justice, because you know her better.' 'True,' said he, sighing, and as if relieved; 'but, let me proceed with the letter;' and, as he did so, he became deeply interested; still he paused to praise you and your admirable expostulation with Miss Brightwen. When he had finished the letter, he sighed deeply, and said nothing; then folding it up, he looked some time at the address, and I really expected every minute he would have pressed it to his lips, but he did not, he only said, 'What a beautiful hand-writing!' thanked me, and returned it to me. Soon after he exclaimed, 'Poor Aston! I am told he is not happy with his wife; she knows he did not marry

her for love, and is therefore jealous of every woman he meets, though hitherto without cause. I am really inclined to wish, with Lady Helena, that he were safe home again!' He then relapsed into reverie, and soon after took his leave, telling me he was going to set off for a ramble in the Highlands the next day. 'I am a restless mortal,' cried he, 'as he opened the door, and never so restless as now; my mother has great forbearance with me, and bears my absences well; however, though frequent, they are not long, and I leave her now in excellent health. God bless you! I shall hear of you from Fortescue—who if, as report says, Lord Clanross is to be the happy man, comes hither much too often for his peace.' I wish he had not said this; but it was in one respect comforting without being dangerous; as it proved that he did not see I loved his friend. 'Your brother comes hither too often for his peace if I marry another!' those were his words; but I must not dwell on them; however, it is very certain

that he is jealous of Lord Clanross's visiting here. The first time he saw him, he turned pale, and scarcely returned his salutation! Will you be very angry if I say that I cannot help thinking of the dog in the manger. Now, is not that more like you than me? You see I grow saucy—do you not therefore suspect that I am growing happy? How much easier is it to be amiable and proper when one is miserable than when one is happy! Well, then, ought we not to be even more thankful for a state of trial, than a state of happiness? I know Miss Brightwen would say yes.—Oh! that she were but here to teach me to bear trials with fortitude and blessings (should any be in store for me) with calm and thankful equanimity!

"Ever your affectionate, and faithful

"JULIA VILLEROY."

CHAP. XII.

LADY HELENA replied thus—"Indeed, Julia, if your happiness encreases in proportion to your sauciness, you are in a fair way of being intolerably happy! and to punish you I send you the following *rabat-joie*.—Our dear Miss Brightwen is again summoned to her sister, whose life of toil and woe seems about to end.—Still Sophia, whose love for her encreased with the consciousness of the good she was able to do her (the grand secret of all attachment), shrunk from the idea of a final separation from her, and though she bears it with resignation feels it as a trial. For my own part I selfishly rejoice at this her removal from a life of care, as I flatter myself that now Miss Brightwen will be suffered to remain stationary here, for I am very sure that Aston will find some excuse for giving up the plan he named to my mother. He

has been over from Hastings once since he went thither, and staid here two days, which two days he spent almost exclusively (except when engaged on the business for which he came) with Sophia. He shewed her her picture too, which was found amongst her brother's things—and which he has never parted with. The sight of it overcame her excessively, and she wept over it, pressed it to her heart and her lips repeatedly, while a thousand dear and tender recollections thronged over her mind, and then she was depositing it in her work-bag, as if she thought it was her own property, when Aston snatched it from her, exclaiming—"What are you doing? it is mine!" and instantly quitted the room with it to her excessive amazement—for said she, its value must be greater to me than to Lord Aston; but perhaps he was afraid to seem willing to part with it, lest I should think it a slight to poor Edward's memory; therefore, I dare say I shall have it in time.—'I dare say you will (I dryly replied) but not yet.'

My mother writes word that Aston returned in very low spirits to Hastings, and that he becomes more absent, and more gloomy every day, and talks of going back to France very soon, and then proceeding directly to Nice with his family—but not one word of taking Miss Brightwen with him, to my mother's great surprize, but not to mine.

Now let me desire your congratulations on the encrease of my importance. Here I am, in solitary but supreme dominion! *I*, the rash, eccentric Lady Helena Fortescue, aged only eighteen, and a few months am *reine regnante* of Laurel Grove! My father went on his tour four days ago, and I cannot learn that he desired Sophia to take care I did not fall out of the window, or into the lake, but I verily believe he did desire her to keep a sharp look out after me—for they were closeted before he went, and he said with great significance—"Helena! I leave you under excellent care, and in excellent company! therefore I can feel no anxiety concerning you!"

" Poor deceived man ! for the excellent care left me to my own devices three days after, and the excellent company became entire solitude ; but no matter—what says the poet,

' Oh! lost to virtue ! lost to manly thought,
Who think it solitude to be alone !'

Now, lost to virtue, I certainly am not, in the common sense of the expresion, nor am I lost to manly thought, if thinking of some more particular man, such as Aston, and perhaps one other explains that phrase ; and I think it no solitude to be alone, on the contrary, I enjoy the novelty of my situation, and I was really so child-like the other day as to receive the good old Magnals, who came to call on me, sitting on the raised ottoman in the drawing-room, *en reine*, like the penny prints of Queen Anne, with a melon in one hand for a globe, a poker in the other for a sceptre, and a red shawl thrown royal-mantle fashion over one shoulder. The poor old lady thought me mad at first, but her hus-

band understood the joke, went down on one knee, and kissed hands; you may suppose they would gladly have taken me home with them, but I would not go; I told them Lady Helena Fortescue was delightful company, and that at present I could not bear to part with her; this was a fact, which they could not be so uncivil as to contradict; so here I am—and I go singing all over the house like Alexander Selkirk in the song,

'I am monarch of all I survey!'

I have began a course of reading, and I have refused to join my mother at Hastings yet, especially as I could not have a bedroom to myself, for Lady Aston's sister and niece are on a visit to Aston, but when they go away, I mean to succeed them. Your letter, dearest girl, is just brought in! and I grieve over its contents! your poor, suffering father! It must be dreadful to see a parent suffer! but it must be a comfort to you to see Sir George so cheered by the presence and attentions of my brother! and also to know

that every pang you feel is met by the man you love best, with the most tender sympathy; but pray, pray take care of your own health! Marcus says he is anxious and wretched about you! 'Strong terms those! and I repeat them, that on one subject you may be anxious and wretched no longer. Shall I come to you; I dare come without asking leave on an occasion like this? Say the word, and I abdicate my throne directly.

"Thine, more than my own,

"H. F."

Julia refused to accept Lady Helena's kind offer, from a regard to the feelings of Lady Villeroy to whom she saw the visit would be unwelcome; and to say the truth, in the constant society of Fortescue, who shared her attendance in the sick-room during the day, she had now every possible alleviation of her sufferings which she could receive; for Marcus, whose heart had been deeply impressed by the sterling worth of her character, as shown by her quiet, unpresuming performance of some of the dearest and most sacred duties of

life, had now requested permission of Sir George to pay his addresses to her; and the delighted father had declared, that could he but live to see his daughter the wife of Fortescue, he should not have a wish ungratified. This joyful news was instantly communicated to Lady Helena by Julia and her lover; but though welcome and ever precious as the communication was to the heart of that affectionate sister, it reached her at a moment when a strange, unexpected, embarrassing and distressing circumstance nearly engrossed every faculty of her soul, and had awakened these various and contending emotions.

When Lord Restormel set off on his journey to Scotland, his mother went on a visit to a friend in Sussex; but her waiting-maid who accompanied her, was seized with an alarming illness, which was soon pronounced to be a fever of a very dangerous and probably a catching nature. Lady Restormel had her, therefore, instantly removed to a farm-house in the neighbourhood inhabited by her own sister, and sent for her mother also to attend on her; and

having waited on the spot till assured that the poor woman was out of danger, she set off on her return home, feeling exceedingly unwell herself, and unable to endure any society. On her road, one of the leaders fell, as the heavily laden carriage was coming rapidly down a steep chalky-hill, very near the lodge at Laurel Grove; the consequence was an immediate overturn down a small hollow on the side of the road, from which Lady Restormel received a severe blow on the head, and was taken up insensible!

"What a comfort it is!" cried one of the servants, "that we are so near a gentleman's house."

"Who lives there?" and on being told it was the seat of Lord Erpingham, the man exclaimed with great joy—"Why, that is Captain Fortescue's father, and he is my young lord's particular friend! let us take her thither directly:" accordingly, she was driven, still insenble, to the door of Laurel Grove, and Lady Helena, who remembered the liveries,

though she had only beheld them once, saw, from the balcony in which she was sitting, the carriage with the Restormel arms slowly driving up to the door, and a lady, apparently dead, inside of it! What could this mean? but impulsive humanity does not pause to think. In an instant, Lady Helena was at the door, and in another, the story was told, the intrusion explained, and Lady Helena Fortescue, with a sort of bewildering emotion, a sort of half conscious consciousness, a painful pleasure, saw the woman who disliked and feared her, admitted as a guest under her roof, and thrown upon her hospitality and humanity for relief and assistance—that woman, too, the mother of Lord Restormel! oh, how rapidly did her heart beat, and how impeded was her breathing, while she said within herself, how happy I am, to have an opportunity of returning good for evil?

When the surgeon who had been sent for arrived, he pronounced his patient to be in great danger, and feared there was a

concussion of the brain; but his fears were removed when she recovered her senses entirely, and demanded to know where she was. On hearing she was at Lord Erpingham's, and that Lady Helena Fortescue, the only one of the family at home, begged leave to pay her respects to her, she tried to rise from her chair, and exclaimed with a tone of aversion—"Lady Helena Fortescue! no, no; take me away for mercy's sake—take me away any where else directly! *I* see Lady Helena Fortescue—odious! no, no—no Lady Helena Fortescue shall come near me." The surgeon and attendants saw in this symptoms of impending delirium only; but Lady Helena, who stood behind her sofa and heard it all, considered it as the immediate impulse of her heart, and understood its cause, and felt its importance, only too, too well. But her line of conduct was clearly marked out to her, and beckoning the surgeon out of the room, she desired to know whether Lady Restormel could be moved with safety. He declared it was impossible.

"Then," said she, "assure her of this yourself, and tell her also, that as she must be kept perfectly quiet, Lady Helena Fortescue must not be allowed to see her, nor must any one—but tell her, likewise, that the servants, and all the house contains, are at her service, and that she is absolute in command here." The surgeon obeyed, and Lady Restormel ungraciously said, "Well, as I must stay here, it is a comfort to know I can't see Lady Helena, and the house is not *her's*, and her mother was once my intimate acquaintance." The surgeon was now convinced that dislike and not delirium spoke, but though he was surprized, he thought it right to ask no questions.

Lady Helena's feelings were now undefinable even to herself, she was glad and she was sorry, she was mortified and yet she was gratified. She was enabled to do good to an enemy—and perhaps she might convert an enemy into a friend, hatred into affection. But would it not be mean in her to wish to do so? "No, let her hate me still!" was the whispered reply

of her proud heart; and while she busied herself in every possible preparation to accommodate the sufferer, and saw herself rendered as comfortable as her sad state would admit of, Lady Helena turned faint with strangely contending feelings, while she almost murmured aloud—"And yet she hates me; however, she hates me without a cause; but she shall continue to hate me, I will not bribe her into loving me; no, no, not even though she is Lord Restormel's mother! but he! oh, where is he? what he will feel if ——" here she ran to the surgeon to ask if she had not better send for her son directly.

"By all means," was the answer.

"Where is your lord," said he to Lady Restormel's gentleman?

"In Scotland!"

Lady Helena burst into tears as she exclaimed—"In Scotland! and his mother thus! Poor! poor Restormel! but what is his address; and could he not be overtaken?"

That was impossible; and he had

given no orders but that his letters should be directed to the post-office, Edinburgh.

"Then eight days must elapse before he could arrive, and what may not happen in that eight days!" said the surgeon despondingly.

"But write, write directly!" cried Lady Helena, "and do not, do not tell him all you fear! think what a journey he would have!"

"Do you know Lord Restormel?" he replied, struck by her strong emotion.

"Very little, but I well know his love for his mother."

He then wrote as she desired, and was going to seal the letter when he thought it would only be kind in her to add a few lines, and she took the pen with trembling fingers, but delicacy and pride resumed their power over her, and she forbore, returning the pen unused. The surgeon, however, seemed inclined to add something, but did not, and proceeded to fold and direct the letter.—"I thought," said he, "of telling Lord Restormel, that though all

the family here were out, except your ladyship, that he might be sure all would be done for the good lady that could be done, as you were very kind."

"And why did you not?"

"Because your ladyship knows the old lady dislikes you so, I thought it would make the young lord more uneasy to know that her friend the countess was not at home, and that you were."

Lady Helena said nothing, but turned away, shocked and disappointed; and she wished that she had written, for she was sure the son did not dislike her, though the mother did; and she fancied that he would have been pleased to know she was under her exclusive care—but it was now too late: and, after all, whatever feelings might urge to the contrary, judgment approved her not having written. As the surgeon had said all that was necessary, it was more delicate, more dignified! more what Lady Restormel herself would have approved, and a degree of *retenue* of which she would have thought Lady Helena incapable. To

one person, however, Lady Helena thought it necessary to write directly—and that was to her mother; though she could not but wish that the task of providing for the necessities of her reluctant guest should be her's, and her's alone; she was, therefore, pleased to find, by her answers, that Lady Erpingham fancied it impossible for her to leave Lord Aston. Still, though her servants were very attentive, she felt a degree of painful responsibility when the surgeon declared that Lady Restormel grew more alarmingly ill every day, and that he was convinced she was labouring under fever—not the result of the accident, but which was lurking in her veins when the accident happened — fever, probably the result of her being so much with her sick servant: "However," said he, "she may, with medicine and care, struggle through; but I must beg for further advice."

Lady Helena instantly sent off for the nearest physician, who confirmed the opinion of Lady Restormel's danger. "Gentlemen," said Lady Helena, in a faltering

voice, " with your leave, I will do in Lady Restormel's case what I should do in that of my own mother. I will have a consultation of physicians, if she grows worse. Poor Lord Restormel shall have the comfort of knowing all was done that could be done."

Lady Restormel did grow worse, and two of the first London physicians were sent for by Lady Helena. They approved the treatment already pursued — prescribed medicines to be given, with a degree of regularity and attention, which it required the most careful and attentive of nurses to administer — but declared their opinion, that the case was one of the most imminent danger! " Your ladyship may venture in," said the surgeon to Lady Helena, one day, " the poor lady will not know you; she knows no one, her delirium is so high! —she takes your Gibbs for her own waiting maid, who, by the bye, and between ourselves, is not the best of nurses; for I see she can't bear sitting up, and I found her dozing last night when she ought to

have given the medicine." Lady Helena was shocked: for on strict attention to the orders given, the life of the patient might depend! What was to be done, and whom could she trust, as neither the surgeon nor physician could stay at night? But a ray of light broke in upon her;—Lady Restormel could not know her, and the surgeon should not see her; she would swear Gibbs to secresy, and she herself would be the nightly watcher by the bed of the sufferer. In vain did Gibbs refuse to let her lady perform her difficult duty. Lady Helena having sworn her and the other attendant on the Bible, never to betray the secret, put on a bed-gown like that in which Gibbs nursed, wrapped the same shawl round her, and having heard the directions given by the medical attendants, she gave the medicine and the nourishment herself to the fevered lips of the invalid, met the frenzied glance, full of strange hallucinations, secure of being unrecognized, and had the proud and generous delight of trying to save the life of

that being, in a state of helpless unconsciousness, from whose repulsive eyes she would have fled with resentment, when that eye possessed the power of distinguishing; and who, had she been conscious, would have rejected her kindness with contemptuous coldness!—certain it is that during the hours which Lady Helena passed by the bedside of Lady Restormel, she experienced some feelings of finer and more exalted satisfaction than she had ever experienced in her life, and never, never did her lips breathe out addresses so full of fervour and of thankfulness to her Creator. But no human being, except Gibbs and one other servant equally sworn to secresy, knew of the risk which she was running, or the fatigue she was undergoing; and when the medical attendants learnt from Gibbs every day on account of that attendance, which she had not given, (for she had usually slept in an adjoining room while Lady Helena watched) it was with inconceivable delight that the latter found her skilful and attentive nursing extolled,

and heard Mr. S. and Dr. L. declare that if Lady Restormel lived, it would be owing to the excellence of the attendance which she received. 'But, surely, surely she will live!' cried the agitated girl. They would still only reply, 'we hope so, but this continued delirium under her circumstance is alarming!' In this state of anxiety and fear, slightly alleviated by glimmerings of hope, passed seven days and nights, during which Lady Helena took scarcely any rest but in the day. At length, on the night preceding that on which Lord Restormel could with any certainty be expected, the pulse fell, the head seemed clearer, the patient swallowed with less difficulty and more willingness, and when Dr.L. came in the morning, he pronounced the crisis to be over.

"Thank God!" cried Lady Helena, bursting into tears, "what good news for her son when he arrives, and surely now he must be very near if the letter reached him!"

"When he comes, if he loves his mother as much as he is said to do, so as to

see only through her eyes," replied Dr. L., "he ought to settle a pension for life on your Gibbs, who did all the night-nursing I find; what an accurate account she has kept of what was given, and so on; one would think no one but a person deeply interested could have taken such pains, and really, any negligence might in this case have been fatal; I shall take care to let Lord Restormel know this."

A sob so full of pleasure as to be intolerably painful for a moment now burst from the bosom of Lady Helena, and she was forced to leave the room.

" Well, then! I have been the means of saving her life—her's!—I, that odious Lady Helena Fortescue, whom she would not allow to approach her! What a secret, but precious consciousness shall I carry in my heart through life!—what pangs I have saved to Lord Rostormel!—what overpowering feelings I shall have when I see him!—but why, why is he not here?"

It was near noon before Lady Helena saw, from a gazebo in the park, a post-

chaise and four just appearing on the top of a hill, and driving at full speed. "It is he, no doubt!" she exclaimed, and hastened to meet him at the lodge-gate, to curtail his dreadful suspense by telling him his mother was declared to be better; and she very naturally concluded this assurance would be more satisfactory from her than any one else. That done, thought Lady Helena, to him, in future I shall resign my task of watching, and I shall also avoid meeting him in the day. I am sure Miss Brightwen, were she here, would say my determination to avoid him was strictly proper. Lady Restormel shall never have it in her power to saythat Lady Helena Fortescue took advantage of existing circumstances, and her helpless unconsciousness, to try to entrap the affections of her son.

While these thoughts were rapidly passing in Lady Helena's mind, the chaise almost as rapidly had reached the gate of the park, where Lady Helena was standing in a state of indescribable emotion. It contained Lord Restormel, who had tra-

velled day and night from Edinburgh on receipt of the letter; and now, worn out with anxiety and fatigue, had, with a beating heart and trembling frame, discovered the house where he might learn tidings which would convulse his soul with agony. At this moment he beheld Lady Helena, and saw she was pale and in tears. In an instant he was by her side, and grasped her hand, but could not say, 'How is she!' Lady Helena was silent too; but she smiled through her fast falling tears, and at length faltered out, "She is better."

"My God, I thank thee!" cried Lord Restormel, sobbing convulsively; when he recovered himself, he exclaimed—"How good it was of you to meet me! but in—in—" trying to help her into the chaise as he spoke.

Lady Helena, however, refused compliance; she said she wanted to walk, and begged him to proceed on his road without thinking of her. He obeyed in silence; but he was no sooner out of sight, than

Lady Helena thought she might as well have accompanied him. By not doing so, however, Lady Helena saved herself many a pang, as she did not witness Lord Restormel's heart-rending agony at finding that his mother did not know him, and had relapsed into that total unconsciousness so agonizing to the feelings of affection—that blindness to the form which it loves the best—that deafness to the voice which it once most delighted to hear, and that insensibility to the caresses of the apprehensive and anxious tenderness which challenges recognition and welcome—but challenges them in vain.

Such was the trial which awaited Lord Restormel on his arrival, and for which the agitated Lady Helena had omitted to prepare him. The consequence was, that overcome with misery, and previous fatigue, he fainted on the bed of his mother; and when conveyed to another chamber, Mr. S. insisted on his not leaving his bed again till he had had some hours of needful rest; and he obtained it, for how-

ever ill she was, he was assured the danger was over; and when Lady Helena quitted his mother's chamber, at dawn the next morning, she pushed a note under his door, which would, she trusted, meet his eye on waking, to let him know that she had slept during the night, and was certainly much better. Then Lady Helena went to her bed, and sweet were her slumbers. They also seemed very long to Lord Restormel, for he had hoped to see her before he took his breakfast in his mother's room; but he was told Lady Helena had a bad head-ache and was not up; nor did he see her through the course of the day—what could that mean? was it accident, or was it design? but that the next day would determine. To-morrow came, Lady Helena was gone out in the carriage; when dinner was served, he found he was to dine alone; Lady Helena had dined early.

"She avoids me I see," said he, deeply sighing, "and she is right perhaps; but I think she might as well have told me

herself, and not by her maid only, that I was to consider myself as master here, and order whatever I liked." At this moment when he had just sent away the nearly untasted meal, Lady Helena entered accompanied by Mrs. Magnal, whom she thought it right should be in the house with her, now Lord Restormel was come. Never before did Lady Helena pay such regard to propriety and the opinion of others; but she was not conscious of the power of that feeling gradually increasing in her heart, which taught her this lesson, and yet, had such attention to decorum been other than her own act and deed, had it been required of her, even by those whom she was most solicitous to please, she would have been impelled, probably, into a scornful disregard of it, and set the daring monitors at defiance. One day and night made now a striking improvement in the state of Lady Restormel's health; her delirium suddenly subsided, and she knew her son! what joy to the affectionate heart of Lord Restormel! what comfort to her

own! to see him whom she had thought far distant, watching with unwearied tenderness by her fevered and restless bed! but she was conscious that he had not always been her attendant, and that her nurses had been women; but one woman more especially haunted her recollection, who seemed to have been with her all night. Lord Restormel said her recollections were correct, and he had understood from Mr. S. and Dr. L. that they owed her unpayable obligations for her care and assiduity, as they had probably been the means of saving her valuable life.

"Unpayable!" said the proud invalid, "have we received unpayable obligations? I trust not, Restormel; but that we must think about hereafter. At present my first wish is to be removed hence as soon as possible, for I must have given great trouble, and where I wish to owe no favors."

"Yet, surely, you have received them here—surely Lady Helena has been kind."

"I have not seen her."

"Not seen her! how could that be?"

"Why to say the truth I refused to see her when first I came, and I am afraid in the hurry of my spirits then, I spoke harshly and repulsively while I so refused."

"But she was not conscious of that."

"Not that I know of—but I thought I saw a lady's figure reflected in the glass, which then suddenly disappeared, and perhaps the servants might repeat what I said, for certainly I have never received any such application since."

Lord Restomel was at first too much hurt to reply! Lady Helena, whose kind attentions were even full of ingenious contrivances for the comfort of the invalid, were, he found, the constant theme of praise with his mother's servants and her own! she, to have had her feelings wounded by being harshly refused his mother's admittance to her presence! the thought was insupportable! nor did she seem, as he ardently hoped to find her, kindly impressed any way towards Lady Helena—though to her alone, and her directing kindness, she must have been indebted for all the alleviations

of her situation! At length he said that, "no doubt Lady Helena had done her duty by the stranger so thrown on her care; no doubt she had seen that her servants had done theirs."

"Oh! I dare say she authorized all that was done; but the house-keeper here is a very clever woman I understand, and, Restormel, I cannot feel burthened with obligation to Lady Helena, or to any one for performing the common dues of hospitality, and for not turning out a poor woman hanging between life and death; I should have done as much for Lady Helena had she been overturned at my gate, and ill in consequence of it."

"No doubt," replied Lord Restormel; but he was grieved to see how little his mother's illness, and even her danger had tended to soften her dislike, and dislike of whom? a highly-gifted being whom she did not know—and in whom, after all, he was sure she feared her charms more than she disapproved her faults. But why did she fear her charms? and why did she dis-

like to know Lady Helena? was it not from apprehensive tenderness for him, and regard for his happiness? was it not because she was afraid that if he loved and married Lady Helena, she would not make him happy? Lord Restormel, as these questions occurred to him, felt his temporary indignation against his mother's prejudices entirely subside since love of him occasioned them; beside, how could he long resent any thing in that beloved parent whom he had so lately been on the point of losing.—Poor Julia, meanwhile, was beholding the latter end of her father, surely, but slowly approaching, and it was well for her affectionate nature that she was soothed and supported by the presence of the man she loved. At one time Sir George wished their union to take place immediately; but he suffered so much and grew so evidently worse, that he owned he was incapable of enjoying the consciousness even of their being united, and he did not wish the bridal hours of Julia to be clouded over by filial sorrow. But

the gloom of Marcus and Julia was cheered by the hopes they entertained that Lady Restormel's detention at Laurel Grove would produce an intimacy between the families, and bring about the union Marcus had so long desired between his friend and his sister; yet, even from them Lady Helena concealed the exertions she had made, and the claims she had in consequence on the love of Lady Restormel—and to the best of her belief, she had put it out of the power even of chance to reveal her secret to any one; and while she looked at her pale cheek and sunken eye, the result of her watchfulness, she felt a degree of triumph and of satisfactory consciousness which her beauty in all its splendor had never bestowed on her. Lady Restormel's own maid was now well enough to come to Laurel Grove; and when she arrived, her Lady declined all other attendance, besides that of her son. Lord Restormel, spite of himself, remained unsatisfied with his mother's feelings towards Lady Helena, and ventured to hope that she would request to

see her before she went away, in order to make her personal acknowledgments and apologies for the trouble given, and the accommodations received.

"Certainly, Lord Restormel," she proudly replied, "high-breeding and decorum require no less; but has Lady Helena asked you when we mean to go?"

He was glad that he was able to reply—"I never see Lady Helena! I have seen her only twice since I came."

"Amazing! how is this?"

"You must ask that of Lady Helena—whenever I have requested leave to pay my respects to her, the answer has been—'My Lady, sir, is gone out with Mrs. Magnal,' who has, you know, been staying here ever since I came; 'or my lady is too unwell to see you;' or 'Mrs. Magnal is unwell, and she cannot leave her;' then sometimes it is, 'but she hopes Lady Restormel continues to mend, and that your lordship and her ladyship have every thing you want.'"

"Very cold, and very correct, and very

civil, observed Lady Restormel thoughtfully."

"Very," he replied, in a tone of pique, and almost of sarcasm, "as much so, I think, as even your ladyship could require. Then, as I dine in compliance with your wishes, in your dressing-room, and breakfast also, I have no opportunity or chance of seeing Lady Helena at meals; but, I dare say, if I were to dine or breakfast below, she would be gone out with Mrs. Magnal, or her terrible headaches would be returned."

"You are piqued, Restormel!"

"I believe I am."

"You have no reason to be so, I suspect! indifference neither courts nor avoids any one."

"Do you think so?" he replied, his countenance lighting up with pleasure.

"But we avoid sometimes what we dislike, Restormel."

"But why should Lady Helena Fortescue dislike me?"

"You are my son."

"What then? she cannot be so unjust as to dislike me on your account, nor is she capable I am sure of disliking you; she cannot be so unjust as to hate any one she does not know, on the mere report of others."

"Restormel! that praise of Lady Helena was blame of me."

"Indeed, I did not mean to censure you; but if I am your son, I am also her brother's friend."

"Well, well! have it your own way," replied Lady Restormel pettishly, "and fancy she avoids you because you are too charming, and she is afraid of you; all I require of you is to avoid *her*, lest she should be too charming also--and let us get away from hence as fast as we can. I shall be able to go, I believe, the day after to-morrow; but I will not go till Lady Erpingham, who is, I understand, expected soon, arrives, as Lord Aston is better—and also some Miss Brightwen is coming home, who is, Warren tells me, a great favorite here; she was governess to Miss

Villeroy, and is now a something to Lady Helena, but what I cannot make out."

"A friend only, I believe, and a woman of rare qualities; she was a blessing indeed to poor Miss Villeroy, and formed her heart to excellence, and her manners to gentleness and propriety."

"She is come then, I hope, to form Lady Helena's manners to the same. I wonder whether she will ever succeed!"

"Your ladyship called Lady Helena coldly correct just now—could Miss Brightwen have taught her more propriety than she has displayed?"

"I dare say Miss Brightwen did teach it—I dare say it was not self-taught!"

Lord Restormel was about to reply with some severity, when the sight of his mother's pallid cheek and emaciated form disarmed him, and he turned away in silence. Lady Helena was now informed by Lady Erpingham that she would be at Laurel Grove in two days time, when she hoped to take on herself the welcome task of doing the honors of her house to

her old acquaintance, and making herself amends for her enforced absence at a time of such interest. Miss Brightwen announced her return for the same day. Lady Restormel desired Lady Helena to be informed, that, though able to go away before her mother arrived, she should make a point of staying to thank Lady Erpingham in person for the hospitality and kindness she had received under her roof. This message appeared to Lady Helena to imply that Lady Restormel was still resolved not to see her if she could possibly avoid it, and meant to pay all her acknowledgments to her mother; and she was still more pleased that she had made Mrs. Magnal promise to take her home with her as soon as she had seen Miss Brightwen, who was expected at an early hour; she also insisted on setting off before her mother arrived, in order to avoid questions and explanations between Lady Erpingham and herself, which it would be difficult to answer. Mrs. Magnal who resented Lady Restormel's not desiring to see her young friend,

the very instant she was able to see and know any one, thought she only acted with proper spirit in leaving the house, as its real mistress was expected and she could do so with propriety. Sophia arrived by an early stage, and in deep mourning for her sister, who, having survived all her children, and being married to a man unworthy of her, had long found life a burden, and felt death a relief. Her affectionate sister, therefore, was at once afflicted and comforted, when she committed her to her grave and to her God. Sophia was shocked when she saw Lady Helena's changed appearance, and evidently languid frame. The frequent head-aches which had offended Lord Restormel's pride, were realities, not pretences; for, with all her heroism, and the support which her pride afforded her, Lady Helena's feelings were wounded—she felt herself injuriously treated by a woman whom she knew that she had not only never injured, but greatly served. True Lady Restormel knew not all she had done for her, but

she knew that she was the temporary mistress of the house in which she had been so kindly treated; and then, instead of an earnest desire to thank her in person, to receive a message importing that she wished to stay to thank Lady Erpingham, without naming herself!—this was such treatment as the petted girl, the beloved and spoiled of all hearts, as Marcus called her, knew not how to bear, and yet vainly tried to rise above.

"What can I have done! in what light can I appear to the world and to Lady Restormel, that I am thus judged unworthy to be admitted into the presence of this severe woman, even when she must consider herself as indebted to my courtesy? have what are called my eccentricities done this? and what then? what right has she to punish them? and then, to think that this is Lord Restormel's mother!" Such were the hourly cogitations of Lady Helena; and, alas, she was well aware that the greatest sting of all was, that the person who thus wounded

her was Lord Restormel's mother! At that idea tears deluged her pale cheek, and that cheek became still paler. To Sophia she unburthened her full heart, in some degree, and owned, indisposition alone had not casued the change she saw.

"But you have a tired, fatigued look, Lady Helena, and as if you had not had your usual quantity of rest lately."

"Can an uneasy and a mortified spirit rest?" was the evasive reply. "I go to my bed now even earlier than my usual time, but I own it is not to sleep there. However, I am going away not to return till the Restormels are gone, and when they are off the premises, perhaps I shall rally again—till then, God bless you!"

Mrs. Magnal staid some minutes after Lady Helena was in the carriage, to tell Sophia how much she abominated Lady Restormel's strange want of propriety in not desiring to see and thank Lady Helena, and how much she admired her

young friend's spirit; she then drove off, and, as she put her head out to give Sophia another nod, she saw Lady Restormel, whom the sound of a carriage had drawn to the window, and who bowed to the old lady, recognizing her as having seen her once at a party in London—but she haughtily drew back and would not return the salutation. At this moment Lord Restormel, who had vainly endeavoured to get to the door time enough to hand the ladies into the carriage, was looking at Mrs. Magnal, and saw the angry, disdainful expression of her face, as her eyes were raised to his mother's window, and he was so confounded by it, that he omitted to request the postilion to stop, as was his intention, that he might speak to Lady Helena; in another moment they were out of sight. He, therefore, entered his mother's room in no pleasant frame of mind, for he was going to leave Laurel Grove immediately, that he might see every thing prepared for his mother's accommodation on the road, and

also at home; and he wished to have had some communication with Lady Helena before he set off; nor was disappointment his only feeling, he feared that Lady Helena was gone away from a determination to avoid an interview with his mother, whose conduct she had so much reason to resent; and this fear was confirmed by the look which Mrs. Magnal had directed to his mother's apartment, at the window of which he now saw that she herself was standing.

"That impertinent old lady would not return my bow, Charles!" cried Lady Restormel as he entered, "what could she mean by it? and who is the lady with her? she is a fine, elegant figure?"

"It was Lady Helena Fortescue," replied Lord Restormel.

"Lady Helena! and gone out, though her friend is just come, her mother coming, and I am going away! How strange! but I suppose she is only gone out for a drive."

"I conclude, madam, that you do not

think it was necessary for Lady Helena to stay in order to take leave of you."

"No, sir, I do not—still I assure you I was just going to request the honor of waiting on her."

"Indeed! then I am sorry she is gone!"

"So am I, especially as I suspect from Mrs. Magnal's marked slight to you just now, as if she resented something, that Lady Helena has left the house to avoid seeing us, and will not return till we are gone."

"I hope you are mistaken," replied Lady Restormel, "I should be really sorry to have offended Lady Helena, and still more to have compromised my character for good-breeding; but what business has Mrs. Magnal to resent Lady Helena's supposed injuries?"

"None but what affection gives. She loves Lady Helena, I suppose, and I believe all who know her love her."

"Again! a bye blow at me, my lord, and Lady Helena the cause of it? that is not the way to make me love her, Restormel!"

"But I only want you to do her justice."

"Your seeming to do her more than justice is not the way to make me do that."

"Well, well, let us drop the subject! I shall enquire whether Lady Helena is expected back; if she be, I shall wait her return."

He left the room, but re-entered immediately, saying, that Lady Helena was gone to stay at Mrs. Magnal's; he then immediately ordered his horses, declaring his intention of waiting on Lady Erpingham and Lady Helena, when he had seen his mother settled in her own house again.

"Be it so;" Lady Restormel coldly replied, "but in the meanwhile let us fulfil still nearer duties. I must see and reward the servants who waited on me, particularly that young woman who sat up with me, and to whom I owe, I believe, what money cannot pay; however, I must do all it can do."

"I have already seen her, and paid

her, and thanked her, and blessed her for myself."

"But that is not enough, I must see her and do the same. Let her be desired to attend me—nay I wish to see both my attendants and the house-keeper also; the other servants you will remunerate for me."

Lord Restormel then took leave of his mother, and having imparted her wishes to the groom of the chambers, he begged permission to see Miss Brightwen, who as much in her heart desired to see him, and was very glad to receive his visit. When strangers meet with a prepossession in each other's favor, it is rarely that they are dissatisfied with the interview; and Miss Brightwen and Lord Restormel parted with feelings of mutual admiration and good will. The former, too, was pleased at being charged with such heartfelt and gratifying regrets, and acknowledgments to Lady Helena, and still more so at the faltering voice and blushing cheek with which they were uttered.

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MUCH TO BLAME,

A TALE.

BY A CELEBRATED AUTHOR.

"Lessons of wisdom have never so much power over us as when they are wrought into the heart through the ground-work of some story which interests our passions."—STERNE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHAP. XIII.

Lord Restormel was scarcely gone, when, according to her request, the female servants waited on his mother. The housekeeper was thanked and remunerated first, and then took her leave.

"To one of you," said Lady Restormel, to those who remained, "I am told that I owe obligations which no money can repay, for that, to your skilful care and attentions, I probably owe my life—therefore, I wish to give you more than money now, and thanks; I wish to tell you that if at any future time you want a friend to settle you in the world, or serve you in any way, I will be that friend. It is you Mrs. Gibbs I think to whom I am more particularly indebted."

"Oh! my lady," she replied, with some embarrassment, "you owe me very little, and his lordship has done so hand-

somely by me, I cannot think of having any thing more."

"My son has done his part, but I must do mine now—I must not, cannot die in any one's debt." As Lady Restormel said this, she approached Mrs. Gibbs, and taking her hand, looked kindly in her face—"How strange this is!" cried she, "I was so sure your eyes were dark, large and dark, and I see they are neither. But your fellow-servant's are dark—surely it was she then who sat up with me?"

"No, indeed, my lady, it was not me, I can assure you!"

"No, my nurse seemed very tall. How delirium must change objects!" continued Lady Restormel, still fixing her eyes on the conscious Gibbs, who shrunk from her earnest gaze—"and beautify also—for so beautiful did my night nurse appear to me that I fancied my poor Warren was dead, and that her spirit came to attend on me, arrayed in heavenly beauty! and then, the tones of her voice were so sweet, and her white hands so soft! and

she raised me in her arms so gently, yet so powerful! I shall never forget it;—it was quite soothing, quite delightful sometimes! and I thought how merciful heaven was to let her come to watch over me!" As Lady Restormel spoke, her voice faltered! she continued, "I can never pay the value of the feelings I then had while enjoying that pleasing delusion; but what I can do I will." Here she put notes in the hand of the under-servant, but a pocket-book in that of Mrs. Gibbs, which she would fain have returned, but Lady Restormel grasped her hand to hold it there, and started on feeling that one of her fingers was bent, and all were large and bony.—"This is very strange!" she cried—"but then, so are delirious fancies! In my wanderings you seemed so much, so very much younger, and so very much taller than you are, and then your hands were so handsome, so soft!"

"Oh! as for the hands—Yes my lady," replied Mrs. Gibbs rather pettishly, who prided herself on her youth, and the

elegance of her figure; "but, indeed, my young lady is not so much younger and taller than I am!"

"Your young lady!" exclaimed Lady Restormel—"what has she to do with this business?—I was not talking of her!"

"No, to be sure, my lady," answered Gibbs, blushing and trembling—"oh, no, nothing, only I thought——." Here her fellow-servant gave her a look of great meaning, which did not escape the penetrating eye of Lady Restormel; and seeing that both the servants were going towards the door, she seized an arm of both, and commanded them to stop, saying—

"There is something which I do not comprehend—are you, or are you not the persons who sat up with me?"

"No, my lady, not I," said the under-servant, "but it was Mrs. Gibbs here."

"Let Mrs. Gibbs answer for herself—was it you then?"

"To be sure, my lady," she replied,

turning now red, and now pale—" who should it be if *not* me?—but pray take back the book, I really cannot take it after this, as you doubt who I was."

" Have I not reason to doubt? Good heaven! could it be? was it possible?" Here she gazed earnestly on Gibbs again, turned her round, examined her hands again, and then desired her to speak as softly as she used to do.

" I, I cannot speak softly, my lady, indeed I cannot."

" No! nor your voice is not that which still dwells on my ear; I am now convinced it is not, but then who was it? answer me woman," she cried, grasping Gibbs's arm as she spoke, " are you not an impostor?"

" Impostor! my lady, not I, I would not have taken a farthing of you."

" And wherefore not, if you deserved it; but did you deserve it? did that girl deserve it?"

" Oh, yes, my lady, that is, I am sure I was with you in the day."

"But was Mrs. Gibbs with me in the night?"

"To be sure she was—who should it be else?"

"That is what I want to know; but I know it was not you Mrs. Gibbs, your cheek and manner give the lie to your words."

"Lie! my lady! I am sure I am no liar."

"Come then! here is a Bible, will you swear that you nursed me during every night?"

"No, my lady, not, not every night, and all night; I cannot swear that, but I will swear that—" here the other servant caught her arm, as if apprehensive that she was going to perjure herself, and Gibbs paused.

"What will you swear? will you swear that the being who did watch by me all and every night, (and scarcely could Lady Restormel now find power of utterance) was not your young lady?"

"No, n-n-o my lady, I cannot swear again, I have sworn not to— I will not

perjure myself, my lady—we are both sworn already my lady, and my young lady would be so angry!"

"Oh, yes, my lady."

"Then! it was Lady Helena Fortescue who—"

"I am sure I did not tell you so my lady, you cannot say that I am sure, I have not perjured myself."

"No, nor I neither!"

"So then! it was she herself; and then, she swore you to secresy!"

"Swore! yes; that is! oh! no!"

"Leave me!" cried Lady Restormel—"go!" then throwing herself back in her chair, she gave way to emotions so violent that they almost shook her yet weak frame to dissolution—"Generous! noble-minded girl!" was all she could articulate, when she recovered herself, "and this is she whom I reviled—I slighted; I! oh! insupportable! and then to go away lest I should see and recognize her, and find out the secret. But perhaps it is not an absolute secret; perhaps she told it to others—

told what I owe her; I wish I could find out. I will question her mother when she comes however, at all events. I owe her obligations so great, as to be painful—overwhelming!"

Thus felt, thus spoke Lady Restormel, as she lay across her bed almost suffocated with contending feelings; and from this state she had scarcely recovered, when she was told that Lady Erpingham was arrived, and begged to see her.

"Admit her instantly! was her eager reply. The greeting of the two ladies was affectionate, and on Lady Restormel's side full of tears; but even emotion could not long prevent Lady Restormel from speaking on the subject now nearest her heart.—"Yes!" cried she, "I have received such kindness here, as I feel I can never repay; but Lady Helena has used me cruelly."

"Impossible! it is not in her nature."

"Yes, it is; after loading me with obligations, she went away to avoid my thanks, or from some other motive."

"Well, I own I was quite surprised not to find her here."

"But why did she go? cannot you guess?"

"Not I!"

"But do you not know that Lady Helena condescended to nurse me during the night? that her care and attention saved my life, and that then she swore the servants to secresy?"—here Lady Restormel burst into tears.

"No, I did not know it—but I can believe it; it was so like Helena! and yet, to risk her precious life! but that was so like Helena also! aye, and then to conceal what she had done!"

"But are you sure she told no one?"

"I dare say not, except it was Miss Brightwen."

"May I see and interrogate Miss Brightwen?"

"Certainly!"

"And may I see her alone?"

"If you desire it; Helena might tell her what she would not tell me, for she would know how the idea of the danger she had incurred would terrify me, even

when I saw her safe and well.—But is she so, for I hear she looks dreadfully."

"God forbid!" cried Lady Restormel, clasping her hands convulsively together. Sophia now sent word that she was ready to attend Lady Restormel's summons, and Lady Erpingham having staid to present her to her guest, left them together.

As soon as Lady Restormel put the intended questions to Miss Brightwen, her surprised and delighted countenance answered them sufficiently even before she exclaimed—"Is it possible? dear, admirable Lady Helena!"

"Then she never told you of her kindness?"

"Certainly not; though I was with her an hour, at least, this morning, before her departure, and expressed the surprise and anxiety which her sickly, tired look occasioned me."

"Sickly! oh do not tell me she is sick, and I the cause! oh, how my heart reproaches me! but now, Miss Bright-

wen, I would fain presume to question you on another subject; can you, and will you, tell me all you know of the length and extent of my son's acquaintance with Lady Helena ?"

Sophia paused for a few moments, but hating concealment, and ever consistent with herself, she resolved to reveal all that ever passed between Lord Restormel, and her young and noble friend; of the journey up to London together, and all that happened on the road, she now gave an accurate account, and also of the conversation in Gloucester-place afterwards, when he called on Lady Helena with her brother, and when he called on Miss Villeroy; and she did this, because she wished Lady Restormel to see and know that her son had evidently declined to pursue his means of forming an intimacy with Lady Helena, spite of his admiration of her, from deference for his mother's opinion, and regard for her happiness; and that Lady Helena had followed his lead, and even at the risk of appearing rude and

inhospitable, had avoided his presence while under her own roof.

"If," thought Sophia, "this woman is of the noble and generous nature which her countenance speaks her to be, she will, especially after Lady Helena's conduct, be impressed by this narration in the manner I wish, and good must be the result."

But whatever Lady Restormel felt or thought, she said little; she only listened in tearful silence, and shook her head when Sophia related the scene in the stage coach. Still, after a silence of strong emotion, Lady Restormel suddenly exclaimed—

"Then you think no one, except the servants, knows that Lady Helena sat up with me, and they necessarily knew it; what, not even Miss Villeroy and Captain Fortescue!"

The quick-sighted Sophia instantly saw the distrust, the suspicion prevailing in Lady Restormel's mind; she discovered that she suspected Lady Helena of

having only acted a part, and of having given herself the appearance of concealing her kindness, well knowing all the time that she had put it in the power of some one to disclose her generosity, and be the means of gratifying her vanity, and probably her affection. With the blush and tone of indignant feeling, Sophia, therefore, instantly replied—

"From what I know of the generous, honest nature of Lady Helena, madam, I assert that she is incapable of meanness or artifice."

"Did I accuse her of either?"

"No, not directly, but I saw what was passing in your ladyship's mind, and to that I reply. Chance has put it in my power to do more—to destroy or confirm your suspicions directly."

"What can you mean?" cried Lady Restormel, too conscientious to say that she had no suspicions.

"Lady Helena desired me to read if I chose, and then to add to a letter which she had been writing to Miss Villeroy. I have

not yet even looked for this letter, but it is in her writing-desk; with your ladyship's leave I will send for the desk here."

She did so; and having herself perused it first, she gave it to Lady Restormel with triumph beaming in her tearful eyes.

"But let me make one request, madam," she said. "Read the beginning of the letter, which cannot interest you, as well as the end, which must."

"Why so?"

"Because they both equally develope the character and mind of Lady Helena. The first will show you, I trust, that her nobleness of nature is above the artifice with which, excuse me, I saw that you were inclined to charge it."

Lady Restormel was a proud woman, proud of her high birth, proud of her rank, proud of her intellectual superiority, and also of that lofty deportment, that dignity which had so often awed her inferiors, and even her equals, into distant respect and flattering fearful deference.

But there is something in the fearless firmness of a mind confident, from the consciousness of rectitude, and in the bold frankness, the unshrinking dignity of a being whose consequence is derived from mental powers and unblemished virtue alone, which excites, in even pride, however great, a respect and admiration equal to what it claims itself on clearer grounds, in the eyes of vulgar judges ; and while Miss Brightwen thus dared to read her inmost thoughts, to reply to those thoughts, and to defend with the voice of truth that noble creature whom she saw unjustly accused, Lady Restormel felt awed by a spirit as undaunted as her own, and wondered how the governess of Miss Villeroy could acquire such an influence over her. Lady Restormel took the offered letter, and mildly expressed her readiness to do what Miss Brightwen desired. The letter was as follows :—

" You and Marcus need not be anxious concerning the state of my health. Fever has certainly been in the house, but

I caught it not; and when Lord and Lady Restormel are gone, who, I must own, affected me with a sort of disagreeable influenza, I shall be very well, I dare say, and regain my roses and my sauciness. At present, I own that the anxiety I felt when my poor guest was in danger, the terror lest any thing should be omitted which was of consequence to her recovery, and another painful consciousness, have made me look the colour of a melting cream cheese; and my pleasantry is like that of a beaten child, who pretends to laugh, and says 'I do not care,' but the laugh ends in a sob. I wish that dear, kind, busy being, Mrs. Magnal, had not written to Marcus; but she is so loving, and fancies that I have lately been acting from attachment and preference to her and her society, when, in reality, wounded conscience prompted my first attentions, and necessity my latter ones. I thought that I was rude, and had hurt their feelings by going off after you, Julia, when she and her Heronimus were staying at our house;

therefore, you know, I volunteered a visit to them on my return, and I invited her to stay with me when Lord Restormel came, from a sense of propriety, and because there was no one else at hand. But, alas! the deceived Mrs. Magnal fancies she is my dearest friend, and I feel my sense of integrity wounded by the grateful tenderness which she, in fancied return for mine, bestows on me. Yet how can I undeceive her? for surely my strict love for truth will not authorize me to wound her feelings, by telling her she is certainly only third or fourth best at most in my list of the beloved,—what think you, my dear Julia! still I fear I must undeceive her, and quarrel with her at all risks, for she has hinted to me, and pretty broadly too, that as she has no children, and Mr. Magnal is very rich, she shall leave me a handsome sum when she dies, if he survives her, and all her fortune at his death, as she dislikes her own relations. Now, this must not—shall not be. I have a horror of all dislikes, and still greater of vindictive hatred to relations carried beyond the grave,

and thence, in my opinion, fixing the condemnation of the dying, as no one can deserve to be forgiven who does not forgive. Therefore, I shall try to reconcile her to those relations; but should I fail, I will not be her heir, for rather than be so, I will erect an every day or a Sunday-school in her parish, and write a pamphlet in praise of educating the poor; and I will write another to make it appear that the sixth Heronimus Magnal from the present was not born in wedlock, and that the preux chevalier, whose valour shed such lustre on their race, was said, from undoubted authority, to have died of a wound received in his back. But why should I, even in confidence to you, presume to ridicule the weaknesses of these excellent people? Let me look at home! Oh, the mote and the beam! However, in all seriousness I say, that I must quarrel with them, if they persist in considering me as the heiress of one of them."

Here Lady Restormel ceased to read, and with some coldness said—

"Miss Brightwen, I own that what I

have hitherto read does honor to Lady Helena, and establishes her claim to be considered ingenuous; but if there be nothing more to the present purpose, I—"

"If your ladyship goes on," hastily interrupted Sophia, "you will find much to the point in question, and perhaps I ought to solicit your pardon for the liberty Lady Helena gives herself in speaking of you."

Lady Restormel did not answer, but while a deep blush overspread her cheek, she resumed her perusal of the letter.

"But though I have not vowed eternal friendship to good Mrs. Magnal, I own that my intimacy with her is increased, and is increasing in a marvellous degree, because she enters so warmly into my wrongs and my resentments—or rather I should say her resentments are strong, on account of my wrongs, and it is very certain that intimacies which are founded on the indulgence of the angry passions, are, while they last, (but that is not long, as their foundation is but a sandy one) as violent, or more so than any other; and she is

so angry with Lady Restormel for her conduct to me! To be sure it would have been more dignified in me to have kept silent with regard to the affront she passed on me in the presence of the surgeon, Mr. S., and my own and her servants, in refusing to see me, and I was willing to impute it to the as yet undiscovered powers of delirium; but, my heart was burthened, and I had no one to unload it to but Mrs. Magnal, who entered deeply into my wrongs, but who, like myself, was willing to hope that what she said was the result of illness; but when she recovered her senses we both expected that she would have sent some kind message to me, wishing then to see me, or expressing her regret that she could not yet bear to receive me. Mrs. Magnal, therefore, was indignant when she found that I was still unnoticed, though my servants had well performed their duty by her, and though the medical men had declared when they heard Gibbs had attended on her night and day, that

she owed her life to her exertions—exertions which I certainly must have commanded. Indeed, she was so angry that I believe if she had not recollected that I, like Mrs. Malaprop, pique myself on my parts of speech, she would have exclaimed, 'this comes of her reading and writing—an excuse for my poor friend's errors, which certainly no one would even think of making.'"

"I believe, madam," said Sophia, casting her eye over the letter, "that you have now read enough to shew you that neither Miss Villeroy nor Captain Fortescue are in Lady Helena's secret, and therefore you need not read any more."

"I shall certainly read the whole now, as you thought proper to give it to me for that purpose," replied Lady Restormel, in a tone of pique, "though it is very certain that Lady Helena when she wrote it little thought it would ever meet my eye." Sophia bowed and sat watching with no small emotion what effect the rest of the letter would have on her companion.

"Mrs. Magnal wonders," continued Lady Helena, "why Lady Restormel should be so prejudiced against me—but I do not: I know I have often done foolish eccentric things, and these things may have been related with exaggerations to Lady Restormel; but I do wonder that a lady whom I never offended, a lady who does not know me even personally, should condescend to lend herself so much as I find she has done to the malice and gossip of others, as to propagate idle stories against me, and taking it for granted that all she has heard of me is true, should, under my own roof, refuse to admit me into her presence, as if I were unworthy of her acquaintance, an outrage I could scarcely have believed possible, had not my own ears witnessed it!"

Here, darting an angry look at Miss Brightwen, Lady Restormel rushed into her own room in evident agitation, not choosing to have a witness of her emotion while she read what followed.

"Proud! injurious woman! but how did

he who loves not the proud of heart, humble and bring her down, even in that moment of arrogance and assumed superiority! for he threw her, for the necessary assistance and the offices of kindness, on the mercy of that being, on whom she had had no mercy! and Helena Fortescue was chosen to act the part of the good Samaritan to her severe, unindulgent censor! Julia! what a lesson to my own pride, and to my own arrogance and loftiness of spirit was this humbling of her's! To see that high-born and high-gifted woman, who held her head so loftily, thankfully to have that head repose on the bosom of a stranger, and indebted for her comfort to the attentions of menials! To see her helpless and dependent, and all her infirmities of body and of mind exhibited to the vulgar gaze and comment of inferiors, and hear her, the intellectual and the eloquent, as I passed the door of her apartment, uttering the ravings of a distempered fancy, and exhibiting weakness, which, while in possession of her reason, she would have con-

cealed if possible, even from herself! To fear that she who had been so unindulgent to my failings was now probably about to answer for her own! Oh! Julia, while I heard this, I felt the emptiness of all worldly pride, the presumption of all who censure the errors of others, and fancy they alone are the wise and the discreet; and while I raised my hands in heart-felt supplication for her, I also breathed a prayer for myself, that I might never forget the lesson taught me by the humbling of that haughty and distinguished woman; and that I might henceforward go on my way corrected, warned, and improved. But spite of the deep impression which, as you see, Lady Restormel's conduct has made on me, I still am happier on reflection than I ever was before! I feel that I have performed a Christian's duty towards her, and that though she dispises, she ought to love me. I have also great pleasure in recollecting the conduct of her admirable son—and mine to him. He sought me to express his thanks, but I

avoided him and them. I took no advantage of the mother's unconscious state to inveigle, as she would have called it, the affections of the son, though sure that he shares not her dislike of me. Dear, dear Restormel! Julia, forgive the boast, but I feel that I now have reason to be proud; surely he must have blamed Lady Restormel for not asking to see me; perhaps she meant to see me to-day before she left the house, therefore, I am going home with Mrs. Magnal to avoid the interview. I never would have seen her, I had as strong reasons to avoid her, as she could have to avoid me, and I should always have contrived to be ready with an excuse for not seeing her, still I wish she had desired to see me! yet it is very weak in me to feel thus. I resume my pen to tell you that I fear I must put a stop to my intimacy with the Magnals. Lord Clanross called just now on Mrs. Magnal, and as the Magnals patronize his evident devotion to me, they are always contriving means to throw him in my way. Methinks I see your

surprise, to hear that your lover has so soon recovered his disappointment; but I always knew Clanross would never take any harm from love; I caused him to transfer his love to me by listening patiently to his love for you, and pitying its hopelessness; and, when I discovered the harm my pity had done, and that the balsam I gave had cured one complaint, but made another, I should have taken the first opportunity of saying no, and all would have been well; but these good people will not let the youth disclose his love yet, but advise him to try the effect of time and assiduity; in the meanwhile they beset me with praises of the boy and his riches: I really thought they valued me at a higher rate than to deem such a fickle creature worthy of me, a boy whose heart, young as it is, is already full of the marks of images effaced—like the drawing-board of a school girl; I could never like such a man as that! I value not the passion that can be drawn on and off like a glove, which made of a certain sort

of leather, can be stretched to suit all sizes and shapes—no, no, Lord Clanross avaunt! and ye also, ye Magnals, if you try to force him upon me. Probably I shall never marry; I would not marry a man who could not love and marry me with all my faults, and I fear that with all my faults, love and marry me no man will. Hark, I hear a carriage! it is our dear Miss Brightwen! Now then for an hour's conversation with her, and then have with you Mrs. Magnal, and farewell to Laurel Grove till to-morrow.

Your own Helena F——.

It was with swelled, flushed cheeks and eyes, disfigured with weeping, that Lady Restormel returned to the anxious Sophia. "Miss Brightwen," said she, taking her hand, "I thank you! you have administered a powerful and trying medicine to me, but it has, I humbly hope, done me good. I have now a favor to ask of you—I would not on any account burthen these poor women's consciences with the idea of having perjured themselves, but I earnestly

wish, telling them at the same time that you know Lady Helena was my chief nurse, that you would draw from them some particulars of what passed." Miss Brightwen promised compliance and went in search of Gibbs and the other servant; she found them in great distress of mind, from the terror of having violated their oath; but she contrived means to quiet their fears and convince them that they had not betrayed the secret; and then she gained from them many interesting details, which she hastened to disclose to Lady Restormel and Lady Erpingham. Gibbs, who lay in the next room, had often heard Lady Helena praying by the bed of the sufferer; had also gone in and seen her lying with her head on the bosom of Lady Helena, as she lay on the bed beside her, and she owned she had often said to herself, 'how can my lady be so good to that cross woman who seemed so queer about seeing her when she first came.' Sophia related all she heard with great accuracy, and while Lady Erpingham wept

the sweetest maternal tears over the evidences of her child's worth, Lady Restormel's tears also flowed, but in bitterness as well as thankfulness.

"I thought so!" said she; "I thought my recollection was not a deceitful one! I remember to have seen that graceful being on her knees, her arms raised, and her beautiful hands clasped, while that sweet voice murmured out prayers for me! and well do I remember how pleasant it was to me to be supported on her bosom, while I often fancied her long, full sleeves were her wings that overshadowed me! but, I must go—I can stay here no longer now—Restormel will be uneasy if I am late when he expects me; but I shall not be happy till I return again, and have seen and blessed Lady Helena!" Lady Restormel then took an affectionate leave of the countess—and kissing Sophia's cheek, said—"I never before, on so short an acquaintance, left any one with such sentiments of respect and esteem as I do you Miss Brightwen, and I earnestly hope we

shall meet again, and often." As soon as Lady Restormel was at the gates of the park, she desired to know of the keeper of the gate where Mr. Magnal lived, and how far his house was out of her road. She was told it was full ten miles round.

"No matter," said she, "drive to Mr. Magnal's."

"Dear, my lady!" cried Warren, "surely it will fatigue you to go such around!"

"My mind will be more fatigued if I do not go, and will wear out my strength more."

When the postilions drove into Mr. Magnal's park, and approached the house, Lady Restormel was very near fainting, and almost gasped for breath. It so happened that Lady Helena was in the hall waiting for the carriage to drive up, which was to take her to make a call in the neighbourhood, therefore, on hearing the sound of wheels, she ran to the door, and consequently could not be denied, else, Lady Restormel might have been disappointed in the object of her visit.

"There is Lady Helena at the door, my lady," cried Warren. Lady Restormel instantly looked out of the window, and clasping her hands convulsively, as she gazed on that pale, but lively face, she exclaimed—"Yes, yes 'tis she!" but she saw with pain—that Lady Helena's impulse on recognizing the liveries was to hasten back into the house.

"Tell Lady Helena Fortescue," said Lady Restormel, in a faltering voice, "that my business is with her, and I intreat to see her alone." To retreat, and to deny the request were impossible; therefore, Lady Helena full of wonder and alarm, came forward, and as Lady Restormel alighted, and was supported under both arms into the hall, she curtsied in dignified silence, and led the way into a room, in which was a couch—to which she pointed, as desiring that Lady Restormel should be conducted to it. During this time she felt herself confused and embarressed by the earnest gaze of Lady Restormel's expressive eyes, which were swim-

ming in tears, and when the servants left the room, it was with a beating heart that Lady Helena awaited Lady Restormel's communications; but finding that she remained silent as if expecting her to speak first, and knowing that her voice could not betray her more than her appearance must already have done, if Lady Restormel's memory retained any of the impressions made during her delirium, she ventured to say—"I await the honor of your ladyship's commands."

"Oh! that voice!" cried Lady Restormel, rising and attempting to approach Lady Helena, but her strength failed her, and she would have fallen to the ground had not Lady Helena caught her by the arm, and assisted her to the couch again. She would then have retreated, but Lady Restormel threw her arm round her, and as she held her, she exclaimed in a voice broken by sobs, "nearer! nearer yet!" then straining her forcibly to her bosom, she imprinted a kiss on her reluctant cheek. Lady Helena now still more surprized

and alarmed, struggled in her grasp, exclaiming—" Your ladyship is ill again! I am sure you are ill!"

" Unkind Lady Helena!" replied Lady Restormel! I understand the reproach; you believe that I must be delirious so to caress Lady Helena Fortescue! but have I sinned beyond forgiveness? Oh! if I thought it right to kneel to any one but my God! I would so humble myself before you Lady Helena! but believe me, I am humbled enough in spirit, and I conjure you not to reject the tribute I thus render to your excelling worth, and the proof I now give you of my deep and grateful sense of it!"

By these words, inarticulate nearly with emotion, yet full of the touching eloquence of the awakened heart, Lady Helena could not remain unsubdued, but throwing herself into the arms of Lady Restormel, she wept there some moments in silence: then recovering herself, she exclaimed—" But what does this mean! and what has thus affected you?"

"Do you not suspect that your secret is known?"

"What! have those women betrayed me?"

"Yes, but not voluntarily; my suspicions were awakened, I saw in neither of them the angel whom I had seen in my delirious hours, and I questioned them till my suspicions became certainties; therefore I could not rest till I had expressed to you in words the gratitude which can end only with my life."

Lady Helena had fancied herself sufficiently rewarded before, for the labour of love, which she had performed to one who deserved it not from her, in the approbation of her own heart; but the gratification, which she was now experiencing, was infinitely greater, and she listened to the grateful and touching eloquence of her noble visitor, with her head leaning against her shoulder, and tears of pleasing emotion trickling down her cheeks. At this moment Mrs. Magnal entered the room, who, having seen with astonishment the Restormel liveries at their door, could not rest

till she had learnt why her house was troubled with a guest so hateful and so unwelcome; nor was she more disposed to perform the dues of hospitality when she saw Lady Helena pale and in tears, leaning, as if for support, against Lady Restormel. "Grant me patience," cried she; "what does this mean, and what could your ladyship mean by coming hither to afflict that dear girl—what have you been saying to her?"

"What has made me very happy," said Lady Helena, smiling through her tears, while Lady Restormel was endeavouring to rise, in courtesy to the lady of the house, but finding that her limbs trembled under her, she reseated herself, saying, "Excuse me, madam, I cannot stand; but, as I see that I am an unwelcome guest, I will only indulge myself with a few more words with your young friend here, and then take my departure."

"But may I venture to ask why your ladyship came at all?"

"To pay a debt of heartfelt gratitude, as far as words can pay it—a debt which I was not conscious of till a few hours ago."

"No; you knew you had been the guest of Lady Helena, I conclude, and—".

"I knew," interrupted Lady Restormel, "that I was indebted for the common dues of hospitality, but not for benevolence so exalted, and services so vast."

"Dear, dear madam, forbear," cried Lady Helena.

Mrs. Magnal looked at them both in bewildered silence and amazement.

"I see," said Lady Restormel, smiling, "that I have to tell you all Lady Helena did for me;" and having done so, Mrs. Magnal exclaimed—"Well, was ever the like of that heard—come hither to thank and bless Lady Helena—no wonder indeed; your ladyship ought to fall down on your knees and kiss the very ground she treads upon; but, my dear girl, how could you be so mad and so desperate as to risk

your own precious life, and go through so much, and all for what and for whom—not for a friend but an enemy; what could Lady Restormel be to you—what could you care for her, and you could not have done more for your own darling mother; what could your motive be?"

A burning blush now dyed the cheek of Lady Helena. Such is, I fear, the obliquity of human nature, that Lady Restormel beheld what she considered as a tell-tale blush with great satisfaction, because it lowered her sense of obligation to Lady Helena, and made her suspect that it was secret attachment to the son which had impelled her services to the mother.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Magnal," replied Lady Helena, rather indignantly, "that you are surprised at finding me capable of doing good offices towards an enemy, which is a duty expressly enjoined us; but I beg you to forget that this lady ever was ought but my kind friend, as I see that she now is."

"And ought to be; nay, ought always to have been, in my opinion."

"And always will be her faithful, her devoted friend," said Lady Restormel, embracing Lady Helena; "and now I must take my leave, or poor Restormel will be uneasy; but whatever anxiety my delay will occasion him, it will be all made amends for and forgotten when he learns the cause of it. Oh, Lady Helena, that you would but accompany me home," she continued, in the kindest and most caressing manner; "what say you—remember that I may relapse, and then how I shall want and miss my nurse—do, do go with me, I long to open my house to you, as I have done my heart."

"I am grateful to you for the proposal and the wish," replied Lady Helena, blushing, "but it is impossible for me to comply with it."

"Comply with it—no, to be sure not," screamed out Mrs. Magnal; "Lady Helena Fortescue, indeed, to be invited

merely as a nurse; really your ladyship's presumption, I had almost said, astonishes me."

"You did not so misconceive and misunderstand me, I trust," said Lady Restormel to Lady Helena, after darting a disdainful glance at Mrs. Magnal.

"No, certainly not; but I consider you as at this moment in a state of intoxication, that of strong emotion, and I am very sure that the proposal which your excited feelings urged you to make to-day, your cooler judgment would disapprove to-morrow, and not only so, that judgment would censure me for accepting it."

"You are right, quite right; surely, surely, dear girl, I have hitherto strangely misjudged you."

"Perhaps not; but the line of my duty is here so clearly marked out I could not mistake it."

"Why, really," said Mrs. Magnal, "it was very clear that Lady Helena Fortescue

was not to go with any one as a nurse; that line of duty was marked out plainly enough, and I can only wonder such a thing was ever thought of, much less proposed."

"On that subject, madam, I shall allow you to wonder still," said Lady Restormel, haughtily; "and now, Lady Helena, God bless you, and I hope I may tell Restormel that you will allow him to endeavour to express to you, for an endeavour it can only be, his sense of the obligations you have conferred both on the mother and the son—obligations, too, which, but for circumstances, we should never have discovered."

"Certainly, certainly we shall be happy to see Lord Restormel, whenever he chooses to come to Laurel Grove," replied Lady Helena, with as much indifference as she could assume; and after having received and returned Lady Restormel's parting embrace, she assisted her to the door of the hall, and when the carriage

drove off, instead of going out to pay her intended visit, Lady Helena returned to her own apartment, full of thankfulness, of gladness, and of reverie.

CHAP. XIV.

In the meanwhile Lord Restormel was passing anxious and restless hours, for he feared that some accident had retarded his mother on her journey, or that she had had a relapse, and he had resolved to return full speed to Laurel Grove, when just as he had ridden up a hill, which commanded two roads, and a considerable tract of country, he saw the carriage at a distance, and hastened to meet it, full of anxiety and alarm. But his first glance at the countenance of Lady Restormel reassured him, and surprised him at the same time; for it was a look of such quiet, benevolent cheerfulness as he had not seen on it for some time; it seemed indicative of a heart at peace with itself, and with all the world, even though she must have been conscious that her delay had made him uneasy. This was so singular a disregard to his

feelings in so fond and attentive a mother, that, in a feeling of pique and momentary resentment, he stopt the carriage, and asked what had so long delayed her?

"Oh!" she replied, with a smile of great meaning, "I made a visit on my way."

"A visit! then why not tell me such was your intention; I have been so anxious. And were you in a fit condition to pay visits?"

"No; especially one that lay ten miles out of my way."

"Ten miles!—amazing!—how could you think of going?"

"I would have gone if it had been ten times as far; but let me drive on, I am now nearly exhausted."

Lord Restormel, distressed at his mother's rashness, and wondering what its cause could be, was very impatient till she arrived at the inn, and was able to satisfy the curiosity she had excited. "Now, then, dearest mother, explain, for

I am on the rack of curiosity; where can you have been?"

"To Mrs. Magnal's," she replied; and Lord Restormel started with joyful surprise and emotion, but by his looks only interrogated her further; "yes," continued she, but retaining her calmness no longer, for her voice became nearly inarticulate, from tears; "yes, Restormel, I could not have slept to night, if I had not gone in person, at whatever risk to myself, to thank and bless that noble and admirable girl; and even to humble myself before her. What will you say and feel, Restormel, when you hear that the being who watched over my delirious nights, and preserved the life of your mother, and whom I fancied my guardian angel, was no other than Lady Helena Fortescue!"

A feeling too mighty for expression now throbbed in the heart of Lord Restormel, while sinking back in his chair he murmured out a blessing on her and burst into tears; but the next moment he started

forward, and clasping his mother in his arms, laid her head on his bosom, and held her there for some moments in silence. Happy Lord Restormel! the wound that had so long rankled in his heart was healed. The mother whom she adored, and for whose sake he had been willing to sacrifice his consciously encreasing attachment to the being whom she had proscribed, had avowedly relinquished her prejudice against that beloved being, and had even taught him new motives for love and admiration for her;—the woman whose influence he had vainly endeavoured to escape, had conferred on his mother and himself everlasting obligations, and the duties dearest to his heart now sanctioned the indulgence of its tenderest inclinations. There are moments in life which are worth years of suffering, and Lord Restormel felt that these were some of them. But such are often transient as they are sweet, and so were these.

Lady Restormel, now the violence of

the excitement was past, felt how much she had dared, and how much she was exhausted, and she fell into a deep, long, swoon, which banished from her son's mind all the delightful consciousnesses and pleasant visions which had floated there, and substituted affectionate terror and alarm in their stead. But during the night of watchfulness on his part, which succeeded, Lord Restormel found that his mother's slumbers, though short, were tranquil and refreshing, and the next day he had the happiness of conducting her, though by slow stages, to that house which she had once expected never to behold again! still, however, she had made exertions, and undergone emotions too great for her strength; and when Lord Restormel hoped he should have been able to return to Laurel Grove to express the grateful feelings of his heart to Lady Helena Fortescue, duty, he found, would still confine him to the sick couch of his mother!

"But, dear Charles, if you will not

leave me to go to Laurel Grove," said Lady Restormel, "you must write to Lady Helena."

"To be sure I must," he replied; and a letter was written, but soon destroyed again; another, and another shared the same fate, some were too cold, some too warm; and not one even of those which he most disapproved, could he bear to shew to Lady Restormel. At length he forced himself to be contented, and a letter was sent express to Laurel Grove! Lady Helena, when she left home, had intended to return thither if possible, as soon as she was certain that her guests were gone; but Mr. and Mrs. Magnal were so desirous of her staying till the next day, and she was so averse to treat them as if she made a mere convenience of their house, that she deferred her departure. Nor did she feel this to be the sacrifice which she would certainly have considered it, had not the interview with Lady Restormel taken place—for the evening did not appear long and tedious to her! the recovered sunshine

of her soul shed a radiance over every thing! not only had Lady Restormel's dislike of her faded away, before the consciousness of her kind and endearing services, but she felt that she was become the object of that lady's grateful affection, that the son would be called upon to share in the warm and thankful feelings of his mother! Lady Helena allowed herself full time to indulge in the reveries incidental to such feelings before she joined her host and hostess at their tea-table; she was therefore able and willing, when she did so, to endeavour to make them as cheerful as herself; and she, whom they had seen all the morning pale, absent, languid, low, and silent, now appeared to them with a flushed cheek, a sparkling eye, that eye "begetting" occasions for her wit—

"Which her fair tongue, conceits expositor
Did turn into a laughter-moving jest."

Mr. Magnal was delighted, so was his wife; but she was also surprized, till unable any longer to restrain her astonish-

ment she threw her spoon down, as if in angry defiance, on the board, and exclaimed—" Well, I protest Lady Helena you are inexplicable to me! what is become of all your sighing and moping, and where is that eternal head-ache which you said would last your life? Why, child! you are not the same person you were in the morning! pray tell me what has wrought this change; but do not tell me it is all because that proud, disagreeable woman has been here and kissed you, and cried over, and said fine things to you, which was the least she could do for you after all you did for her!" Lady Helena scarcely knew how to reply to this interrogatory, as she was conscious that to Lady Restormel's visit the change was solely to be attributed, for she felt that it had drawn aside the veil that had lately hid every thing, which was fair in the prospect of creation, from her view, and had removed the weight that sat like the night-mare on her breast; yet answer it she must, and she could only reply with sincerity—" I must own that

Lady Restormel's visit has wrought this change, as her unfounded dislike of me weighed heavily on my spirits." Mrs. Magnal was silent from angry surprise—but her husband said—"No doubt it must have been very trying to you to be disliked and slighted by her, for she is Lord Restormel's mother!" Lady Helena started, and blushed deeply at this assertion coming from a man so wholly devoid of penetration, and feared that the secrets of her heart were not so well concealed as she had believed them to be; but before she could reply, her mind was set at ease on this subject, as Mr. Magnal went on to say, that if Lady Restormel derived no distinction and consequence from her own qualities, she did from being the mother of Charles de Mowbray, Baron Restormel, whose family was most ancient and respectable, and who was almost lineally descended from Thomas de Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, who, when banished from England by Richard the Second, went to the Holy Wars and did great deeds

there. "Grant me patience," cried Mrs. Magnal, who had none of her husband's reverence for pedigree, "what does Lady Helena care for the dead Thomas de Mowbray, she is more likely, I think, to admire the living Charles de Mowbray himself, though he is, I fear, as proud and as positive as his mother, and quite as wrong headed, for I am told all the poor in his neighbourhood can read, owing to him and his mother, and that they are reading their Bibles when they ought to be in bed and asleep."

"Shocking!" said Lady Helena, laughing, "and I wonder Lord and Lady Restormel are not ashamed of themselves to teach their poor to prefer reading their Bible to lying in bed, and if Lady Restormel were not the mother of the man who descends from Thomas de Mowbray, and if he himself did not descend from the same stock, I should certainly not be pleased at being reconciled to the mother, nor glad at never having quarrelled with the son."

The next evening Lady Helena returned home, and her return, with a face dressed in smiles, and with no traces of languor in her appearance, was a joyful surprise to her anxious mother and brother, and to Miss Brightwen, whom her ill looks and depressed spirits had alarmed; nor were they sparing in questions concerning the cause of a change so sudden and unexpected. But it was easier for them to ask than for Lady Helena to reply, and it was with considerable difficulty and evident embarrassment that she informed them of Lady Restormel's visit to her, and of the interesting conversation which passed between them.

"Then I suppose, Helena, you will have a visit from Lord Restormel soon?" said Lord Aston.

"Very likely," replied Lady Helena, unguardedly.

"Oh, you expect one, do you?"

"For shame, Aston! you make your sister blush!" said his mother, "and I am

sure she has no occasion—for she ought to be very proud of the cause of both visits, as they are tributes to her worth."

"No, dear mother, not exactly so. Helena may be proud of the one, but she must be pleased with the other—the one gratified her pride, the other will gratify her——"

Lady Helena left the room before he had concluded his speech.

"So, so," continued he to Sophia, "I see how it is—and I now hope that the first wish of my brother's heart will be gratified; but whither are you going my dear mother?"

"In search of Helena; I have not yet told her all that is on my heart concerning her rash exposure of her own precious life in nursing Lady Restormel; but I could not bear to name the subject to her except in private. It is too painful!"

"It was rash certainly," said Lord Aston, after a short silence, the result of his finding himself alone with Sophia, "it was rash, but who can wonder at and

blame her. Helena would probably have done the same for any one so endangered and afflicted, but so to dare for the mother of a man whom I now suspect was by no means indifferent to her, and to serve her so effectually too, must have been a gratification of the highest order! I declare I should like to see the meeting between her and Restormel! Happy Helena! happy Restormel! now there can be no obstacle to the indulgence of their wishes! and happy indeed are those who can give way unopposed by any external or internal barrier to a virtuous attachment. Oh! how I envy their fate and pity my own!" he added in a low voice, then suddenly quitted the room.

"That dear, amiable being is not happy," said the unconscious Sophia to herself; "I am afraid his wife is not all that she should be!" The next morning Lady Helena rose very early, and sat reading at a window that commanded the road along which Lord Restormel must come; not that it was probable he would come

early, still it was pleasant to look out of the window, and fancy some distant object was the one she expected; but hour succeeded to hour, and yet she saw neither horseman nor carriage in the distance. At length, and as early as he or any messenger from his village could arrive, she descried a man on horseback coming full speed. He brought a letter from Lord Restormel: Lady Helena was disappointed—still, to receive a letter was something, and while with a trembling hand she broke the seal, she was very glad that she was alone. Whatever were its contents, and however little they had satisfied the writer, they were certainly gratifying to Lady Helena—for she read them over and over again, with blushes and trepidation; and with an absent look, an embarrassed manner, and with a voice whose tones betrayed considerable emotion, while answering the morning enquiries after her health, she took her seat at the breakfast table; but in vain did she try to inform her mother that she had had a letter from

Lord Restormel; she had not said so when she entered the room, and while Lord Aston was absent; therefore, now that Lord Aston had joined them, her difficulty was increased, though if Lady Helena had not been too much absorbed in herself to possess her usual penetration, she would have seen that her brother was not in a humour for pleasantry—she would have observed as great a change in him, as had been noticed in herself, but of an opposite nature—she would have heard her mother say—"Aston! there is your usual seat by Miss Brightwen left for you!" and would have wondered that he did not take it, but seated himself at the bottom of the table. She would also have been surprised to hear her mother say—"Aston, I thought you would have resumed your morning walks with Miss Brightwen, but I find she looked for you in vain to-day at the accustomed spot;" while, in reply to Sophia's observation of "indeed I was quite disappointed at not seeing you there," he simply and rather coldly said that he

was busy in his own room; but Lady Helena was wholly engrossed with her own feelings and perplexities, and was wondering how to introduce the subject of the letter, when the butler came in and said, "The messenger from Lord Restormel's begs to know, my lady, whether there is any answer?"

"Oh, no; he need not wait," replied Lady Helena, blushing, and expecting, but in vain, to be the object of some good-natured raillery from her brother.

Her mother, as was to be supposed, only asked, with unaffected surprise, why she had not told her she had a letter from Green Hills; and begged to know what Lady Restormel said of her own health?

"The letter is from Lord Restormel," replied Lady Helena.

"Indeed!—and what does he say?"

"Nothing particular of his mother's health, except that she is too unwell still for him to be easy to leave her."

"But did he write only to say that?"

"No; to thank me—that is all."

"May I not see the letter?"

"No; it would not interest you, mamma."

"Then it does not contain an offer, I conclude?" said Lord Aston, trying to be cheerful.

"Certainly not; if it did, I should have carried it to mamma."

"What, for her to answer it as she chose—obedient excellence!—but perhaps it contains a preparation for an offer; do let me see it?"

"Not for the world, after what you have said, Aston."

"Not for the world!—a strong expression!" But it was scarcely too strong for Lady Helena's feelings at the moment, as she not only considered Lord Restormel's letter as too sacred to be shown to any one, but she feared that another should not discover in it the meaning which she delighted to fancy and to brood over, and should, therefore, destroy the delusion which she had a pleasure in encouraging: she therefore made no reply to her bro-

ther's remark on the force of her words' but observed that she did not choose to expose the letter to his comments, or those of any one, as commentators were apt to obscure the meaning which they pretended to illustrate, and which but for their comments would have remained perfectly clear.

"So, then, there is a meaning in Restormel's letter, is there, which is now clear to you, and which you are afraid should not appear so to other people; is that the case, Helena?"

It was the case; and she knew not how to reply, but, in great confusion, she reproached Lord Aston for his saucy remarks, adding, "Do, pray Miss Brightwen, keep Aston in order, for if you do not, I am sure no one else can."

"Indeed, you overrate my power," said Sophia, "I find I have no influence over Lord Aston."

Scarcely had she uttered these words, when, having now recovered her powers of observation, Lady Helena almost started to see the effect they produced on her

brother. That before laughing eye became downcast, and the arch smile was succeeded by a compression of his lips, as if in suppressed agony; then darting a mournful glance at Sophia, whose head was turned towards Lady Helena, he rose, and hastily quitted the room.

"Aston is certainly ill to-day, or his letters from abroad have distressed him," said Lady Erpingham; "I must go after him."

"Poor man!" cried Sophia, "I began to fear I had unconsciously offended him, there is such a marked change in his manner to me to-day; but I now see that he is only unhappy; I fear his wife is not all he could wish."

"You are right there, Miss Brightwen; but really could you, did you attribute the coldness which you say you observe in Aston's manner to-day to your having unconsciously offended him?"

"Yes, I did," replied Sophia, with great simplicity, and with every appearance of sincerity.

Lady Helena sighed, but said nothing; she was too wise, and too delicate towards her brother; too considerate towards Miss Brightwen to draw aside the veil which hid the truth from her eyes, and she only observed, that Lady Aston not only did not make her husband happy, but was not happy herself, as she knew very well that he married her from gratitude, not love.

"But how is it possible that any woman can live with Lord Aston, and not try to make him happy?—Oh, since I have known him," cried Sophia, in a faltering voice, "I have not wondered that my poor brother was so ready to die for him; and I have felt more reconciled to that terrible event."

Lady Helena surprised at words like these, from a woman of such exemplary self-command, looked at her with a piercing eye, and arch expression of countenance, exclaiming—"This from you! if Aston were not a married man I should think that you were in love with him."

"But he is a married man," replied

Sophia, coldly and proudly, "and I neither forget that, nor myself. Had Lord Aston not been married, I should not have allowed myself to feel for him what I do, much less should I have thought of expressing my feelings. The strength of what I said is a sufficient proof of its innocence."

"Quite sufficient," said Lady Helena; "but, my dear friend, why wonder that Lady Aston torments her husband; you know little of the human heart if you do not know that we always torment those most whom we love best."

"I never did—I never do."

"But you are a nonsuch, and the silly man who called Julia Una, would with greater propriety call you *Unique;* by-the-by I wish he would fall in love with you, as I once said before."

"Do not fib, Lady Helena."

"No; you are right, it is a bad custom; well, but to resume what I said concerning poor human nature, Lady Aston is and must be jealous."

"I dare say she has no cause to be so."

"Humph!—*ne gagez pas.*"

"Lady Helena, how can you thus calumniate your noble brother," said Sophia eagerly, and with a blushing cheek.

"Bravo!—friendship!"—replied Lady Helena, laughing; "however, I have no real indisputable grounds for the calumny, as you call it, and I will say no more; but this I know, Miss Brightwen, that the woman is rash and foolish, indeed, who accepts any thing in lieu of love for love from the man she marries. It were as wise to accept, in return for possessions in the genial climate of Italy, an estate in Nova Zembla. Such a marriage would to me be like the grasp of the statue's hand to Don Giovanni; I should die of it, and so perhaps will my sister-in-law, if she does not wear out her husband first."

"Poor woman! I pity her any way, but most, if having helped to kill, she should survive her husband."

"Then the kindest wish would be, my dear friend, to wish her to die first."

"I do not think it right to have a wish on the subject."

"Nor I; yet I own that it is one on which I have many wishes, but I shall keep them all to myself, and now to my studies."

Lady Helena then retired to her own room, after she had heard from her mother that Lord Aston was only rather depressed, and her chief study was the letter of Lord Restormel. The next day, and the day after, Lady Helena would sit to work no where but in the room, which commanded the road to Green Hills, and never before had she been tempted to draw the prospect from that window, but now she declared it was irresistible, and there she sat at her pencil. It is true that she frequently looked off to see if she could discover a horseman or a carriage in the distance; still she was so interested in her drawing, that it was with great reluctance she left it to dress for dinner. On the third morn-

ing of her industry, she saw an open carriage, and with two out-riders in crimson and silver liveries. Then his mother is better, she mentally exclaimed, and here he is at last! Lady Helena having ascertained this fact, tried to resume her drawing, but her touch was ill-assured, and all was mist before her eyes. Pshaw! cried she, throwing down her pencil, in a pleasing pet,—then going to the glass, she adjusted her hair, was vexed to see her lip nearly as pale as her cheek; peeped out to see how near the phaeton was, and trembled, with emotion, when she saw it approaching fast. Oh! thought she, clasping her hands in thankfulness, with what different eyes and feelings do I gaze on that carriage now to what I did when I saw it last; then the sight of it overwhelmed me with shame and regret, and now it gives me a sensation of triumph and joy.

While these thoughts were passing in her mind, Lady Helena looked out of the window, and met the eyes of Lord Restormel! instead of stopping to receive

and return his salutation, the conscious girl started back, full of blushing confusion, and had not recovered herself when the servant announced him. He was more agitated though not so confused as herself; he had meant to say a great deal when he first saw her, but he was unable to utter a word; he only pressed her hand repeatedly to his lips, then turned to the window in silence and evident emotion.

Again Lady Helena felt thankful, for what different feelings did his kissing her hand occasion in her now, to those she experienced when he had so presumed before; and scarcely could she forbear to press to her own lips the hand which his had touched. But when Lord Restormel had recovered his first emotion, he also recovered his power of speech, and he became so eloquent, that Lady Helena was very sorry when the entrance of Lady Erpingham and Lord Aston interrupted his conversation. Lord Restormel was the bearer of a letter from

his mother, in which she entreated the whole family at Laurel Grove to become her guests, as soon as she was well enough to receive them, and that Lord Erpingham should be returned from his tour, which had unexpectedly been of a longer duration than he had originally intended. A ready consent was granted, and a day of enjoyment succeeded, unclouded over, except by Lord Aston's refusal to be of the party to Green Hills; he had made preparations for leaving England directly, and had written to tell Lady Aston she might expect him every day. He made this unexpected disclosure in the presence of his whole family and Lord Restormel, as if he wished to avoid individual interrogations, as to the cause of his sudden departure; and he made it in a hurried, uncomfortable manner, which did not escape the observant Lady Helena, but she said nothing; and she was still silent though tears were in her eyes, when her mother and Sophia expressed their surprise and disappointment

on hearing of his determination; and Lord Restormel earnestly requested him to postpone his journey; but she was not able to remain so, for Lord Restormel conjured her to use her eloquence to prevail on her brother to delay his departure, that he might come to Green Hills.

"Aston," she replied, in a voice which deep feeling made rather tremulous, "is the best judge of the necessity there is for his departure; if he were to stay here for months longer, I should equally think his stay was too short; but now his health is re-established, I feel that Lady Aston and his children have their claims, and I do not wonder that he is resolved to hasten to them, nor can I urge him to give up his intentions." It seemed as if Lord Aston understood what was passing in the heart of his sister, as she said this, for he did not look at her, as if surprised at her refusal to importune him to stay; but he said in a hurried manner, while the others exclaimed against

Lady Helena for sanctioning his immemediate departure— "Helena has only spoken like a sensible woman, I must go, I ought to go," and then left them. Lady Helena now turned her penetrating eyes on Sophia, to see whether she seemed to feel any emotion or consciousness which she wished and endeavoured to hide; but on the contrary, she told her regret for Lord Aston's resolution, warmly and openly, and her unembarrassed expression of countenance while she spoke, showed that all was at peace within. "I am glad of it," thought Lady Helena, "glad to see that well-regulated mind remains consistent with itself. It would be unworthy of her even to suspect that a married man loved her."

Lord Restormel was easily persuaded to pass the whole day at Laurel Grove, though, as his mother would expect to see him the next day at breakfast in her dressing room, he must travel all night to enable him to be home in time.

"Had we known that you would not

sleep here, and sleep no where to night, my Lord I should not have pressed you to stay the day with us, for the nights are very cold."

"I now regret the pleasure we have enjoyed in your company," said Lady Erpingham; "do not you Helena?"—She wished she could have said yes, but could not; and while Lord Restormel's eyes were fixed on her countenance as if he were curious to hear what her answer would be, she said, "But if he wraps himself up, very, very warmly, Lord Restormel will not catch cold I dare say."

"At least, I can assert that I shall not regard the inconvenience if I do; for so many happy hours would still have been cheaply purchased, and for the suffering from the sensation of—cold itself—that I shall be too much absorbed in thinking over the joys that are past, to be at all conscious of— especially as I may, I hope, expect a renewal of them soon."

How strange, yet how common is that tendency which men and women

have, at all periods of a conscious attachment, to torment themselves! When Lady Helena retired for the night and recalled all that had passed, she thought Lord Restormel's words, which I have recorded above, were too studied, too courteous for a man who felt any deep feeling at the moment; and she worked herself up into a fixed resolution to forget him, or at least, to behave distantly to him at their next meeting; when the sound of violent rain alarmed her fears for his health, and the excessive darkness of the night made her apprehensive for his safety, she could not help exclaiming, as she tried to compose herself to sleep towards morning—"Poor, dear Restormel! how could I ever think of behaving coldly towards him!" The next day Lady Helena rose as much inclined as she had been the preceding one, to indulge in musings, recollections, and anticipations; and all the day, dreams which float round the fancy of those who are conscious of an ever-growing attachment in their own hearts, and have reason to

believe that the attachment is mutual! But she ceased to think of herself and her own prospects when Lord Aston informed her that he should leave Laurel Grove the next day; and when she saw his manly brow was clouded over by a gloom which he evidently tried to conceal.

"This is a very sudden resolution, Aston, I was not prepared to lose you so soon!" she cried, "and this is indeed an affliction to me!"

"How kind in you, Helena, to regret parting with me when the prospects of happy love are evidently opening upon you! I fear if mine were such, that my heart would not be capacious enough for any regrets."

"Do not so judge a passion, you have never experienced, Aston! love perhaps is not so selfish and exclusive a feeling as you imagine." While she said this, the agitated silence of her brother seemed to contradict her assertion, that the passion of love was unknown to him; but he was silent, and Lady Helena continued—"I am not

speaking now from my own experience, for I fear my prospects are by no means so bright and certain as you imagine them, but from the experience of others; and I believe that your happy lover's heart is made so universally benevolent by his agreeable sensations, that he is disposed to love every one and care for every one—and every object that he looks at is charming; just as when one looks into a piece of cut glass, one sees beautiful prisms before us, and on every side, and all are the creations of the medii, through which one is looking, while the more broken the glass, the more bright and numerous are the beautiful rays."

"Yes, Helena; but on the contrary, the more broken the heart, the more dark all surrounding objects appear."

"I was not thinking or talking of a broken heart, dear brother!"

"But I was," he replied, deeply sighing, "let us change the conversation, I want to talk of things, not feelings—of persons, not personations." Here he turned

away to conceal the evident agitation which now shook his frame. Had the cause of Lord Aston's emotion, and that broken-heartedness to which he alluded, been caused by any other circumstance than a sudden, but deep-founded attachment, and one which his being married rendered a criminal one also, Lady Helena would eagerly and tenderly have interrogated the interesting speaker, and by prevailing on him to disclose his cause of suffering, would have tried to soothe it. But principle forbade her to encourage such a passion, and it would have been doing so, had she tempted Lord Aston to dwell on it, by talking of it. The love which it was criminal in the brother to feel, however deserving the object of it, it would be, she felt, improper for the sister to seem conscious of—she therefore awaited in silence Aston's further communications. At length he took a letter from his pocket, which he begged Lady Helena to give his father when he returned, after having first read it herself. It contained, he told

her, his wishes, that Lord Erpingham should settle whatever sum of money he thought fit on Miss Brightwen, for which sum he himself would be answerable—but that the father, not the son, must be the ostensible giver. "My object," he said, "is to make her independent." No money can repay what Edward Everard did for me, even though the life he saved is one of misery and suffering; but I cannot bear that she should, for want of money, be dependent in any way on the kindness of others; and could her brother know her present situation, he would, I am sure, be pleased at seeing her removed from the necessity of it by my hand."

"I agree with you, but I fear Miss Brightwen will not condescend to accept pecuniary obligation!"

"How! not when I must still remain the obliged person!"

"Yes, as you are not paying her in kind. If Lady Aston had been poor, would you have thought of giving her money in return for her tender care of you?"

"No, certainly not."

"Well, then, how can you even offer to repay the service prompted by the heart which the brother rendered you, by a pecuniary service to the sister?"

"Helena, Helena, have mercy on me! I cannot endure that Miss Brightwen should remain dependent even on my own family, and if she has any generosity in her nature, she will not render an unhappy man still more unhappy, by refusing what can alone alleviate his sense of suffering: will you be my advocate?"

"I will."

"Now then, to give you another commission." He then took a sealed parcel from his pocket; it was Sophia's picture. "Take this picture," said he, with as much firmness as he could assume, "and when Miss Villeroy marries Marcus, let it be my wedding gift to her, for I know she will value it, and of all my presents she will value that the most."

"Yes, if it be Miss Brightwen's; but I thought you would never—"

"Helena!" he replied, seizing her hand, "I have been rash and presumptuous, but I cannot be deliberately unprincipled. Take away that picture! I have looked at it too long!"

He then left the room, but soon returned, calm and with a look of mournful resignation, which Lady Helena saw with more sympathizing emotion than she thought it right to express; but she could not help seizing Lord Aston's hand, and affectionately pressing it; his returned the pressure, and both felt that the heart of each was understood by the other. But Lord Aston was not to go till the next day, and Lady Helena had a strong curiosity to know before he went what Sophia's determination would be with regard to the offered donation. Accordingly she sounded her on the subject as delicately as she could, and at length informed her of her father and brother's wishes on the subject. To Lady Helena's great surprise and satisfaction Sophia betrayed no signs of impatience while she spoke,

and no blushes, as if of wounded pride, mantled on her pure pale cheek; her eager questioner therefore thought the point was gained, and that she should make her brother easy before he went. But the opposition and resistance of principle are always calm and dignified. It is only that of the temper or feelings which is angry and impatient, and Sophia's was the former. When Lady Helena had ended, Miss Brightwen calmly replied, that she was deeply sensible of the intended kindness, and begged Lady Helena would repeat her words, but declared her fixed resolution not to profit by it; and this kindness is the result, in my opinion, of erroneous views of my past and present situation; your brother cannot bear that I should be dependent on any one, and exposed to the caprices and temper of any one. Now I shall begin my reply by asking you what is being dependent? you do not I suppose call the tradesman dependent on you of whom you purchase goods? You give him money, for which he gives you money's

worth; that is he barters his possession for yours, and you never look on him as your dependent.—I do the same for a certain salary, I give my time, and the use of my poor abilities to a young lady, in order to benefit her in the way required; that is, I give what I have and she wants for her parent's money, that money I fairly earn therefore, and this is no dependence. Indeed Lord Aston is frightened at a word. But then you tell me he connot bear that I should work for my living—I, born to higher prospects. That is kind, but if there be any state of mind more desirable than another, it is that of complete resignation to the will of Providence, and to whatever trials it has been pleased to ordain. Such, after some human struggles, I obtained—such I feel still, and believe me that, while I have been earning my pittance, cheered by the consciousness which I have mentioned, I lay my head on my pillow at night with feelings I would not exchange for any the world could give me. No, no, I cannot

sacrifice my independence, and why should I do it?—the service of love that my poor brother rendered Lord Aston, no pecuniary service to me or mine can repay."

"So I said!" eagerly exclaimed Lady Helena; "and I should incur odious pecuniary obligation, and yet Lord Aston be in debt still to one whom he can never remunerate,—I should lose all I value, and he would not be benefitted by it."

"Yes, he would be benefitted in his feelings, but I should be injured in mine; and much as I esteem Lord Aston, I feel that I am not called upon to make this sacrifice of my own feelings to his?"

"Certainly not."

"Then, as to the misery of being exposed to the caprices and tempers of other persons; this again is starting at a name. Those only are great sufferers from the temper of others, who cannot command their own; and this cannot be my case, for, remember, I have lived with Lady Villeroy."

"Yes, and you are going to live with

that capricious young person, Lady Helena Fortescue; and depend on it you will not earn your living too easily with her. I profess myself convinced by your reasoning, and seeing clearly that you, on principle, court trials, I shall, on principle, give them to you, that you may depend on."

"Do not calumniate yourself, dear Lady Helena; I doubt not but I shall be quite happy with you, though I assure you that I do not mean to accept money, even here, without earning it by the performance of some duties. I know I feel that I can be of service to you, and if I can but break you of one bad habit, I shall have deserved my reward."

"Certainly; but suppose I marry, as papa and mamma are too old to improve, what will you do then?"

"I dare say I shall easily find a situation, as I flatter myself I can have a good character from my last place."

"Oh, yes, I shall be exhibited as a proof of your *sçavoir faire*—and only see

and hear Lady Helena Fortescue!—what a pattern of propriety she is become! and all since her eccentricities were cut off and pared away by the Brightwen's scissars. Oh, dear, what a happy man her husband will now be;—but how can I laugh thus, when our poor, dear Aston is going away to-morrow."

"To-morrow!"

"Yes."

"But not early?"

"We shall see him again after to-night."

"He says so."

"And he did say so!"

But Lord Aston finding that he could not take leave of his family, and Sophia, without betraying emotions, which he wished to conceal, resolved to depart early the next day, without taking leave. Lady Helena's quick eye, however, discovered the secret; and when they parted, at night, she threw herself into his arms, and while she received his affectionate embrace, she was convinced that it was a final one.

The next morning, when Lady Erpingham asked where Lord Aston was, as they assembled at breakfast, she heard that he had departed at day-break, and her grief was excessive; nor was Sophia less loud in her expressions of regret, so loud that Lady Helena was still more convinced her brother suffered alone, and that no shade of forbidden tenderness darkened the spotless purity of Sophia Brightwen's character.

CHAP. XV.

A MATERNAL change now took place in Sophia's prospects. Her father wrote to inform her that her mother-in-law was dead; she, therefore, expected that he would soon summon her to superintend his family.

Lady Erpingham regretted her son's departure, the more because he would now sail without seeing his father again, for if he had waited only two days longer Lord Erpingham would have been home.

The earl's tour had been extended far beyond his expectations; and circumstances had delayed his return, but they were of so pleasant a nature to his benevolent heart, that he did not regret the delay, and he now came home with tidings to impart, which would, he knew, be received with joy by every member of his family.

When Lord Erpingham sought and

found Mr. Brightwen, to whose abode he directed his steps as soon as he set out on his journey; he felt great anxiety at the idea of seeing him, from expectation of the emotion he should excite in him. But the Mr. Brightwen whom he now saw was quite a different person from the man he had once beheld; he was then an opulent country gentleman, with feelings unchilled, and prospects unblighted; since then he had been a ruined man, had been forced to sell his estates; had married merely to procure the means of living; had been obliged to let one child leave his home to earn her own livelihood, and another contract a bad marriage to procure a maintenance; and, lastly, he had become a speculator. Alas! the heart that has once been put in the exhausted receiver of that air-pump—commercial speculation, has its affections in a measure dried up, and withered for ever. A series of selfish anxieties make a speculator wholly engrossed in himself and his own concerns, while tenderness and consideration for others fade away before the

constant gnawings of alarmed and craving self-love. Hence the name and recollection of Edward Everard, once so sacred, so fresh in his mind, and so overwhelming to his feelings, were become matters of indifference to him. Hence Sophia, that child whose virtues were once his pride, was now rarely remembered by him with pride or pleasure, and he had almost ceased for some time to write to her; therefore it was only in consistency with this state of mind that Mr. Brightwen should receive the disclosure of Lord Erpingham's being the father of Lord Aston, the man who had been the means of depriving him of Edward Everard, with the most perfect *sang froid,* and hear with no uncommon pleasure his eulogy on his daughter.

Interests of a nearer and dearer kind evidently engrossed him; and as Lord Erpingham had heard on enquiry concerning him that he and his partner were great speculators in trade, he suspected that Mr. Brightwen was then undergoing the consequent anxiety of such ventures,

but he was mistaken. Mr. Brightwen was indeed every day expecting to hear the result of one of these risks, but he was also on the eve of learning whether his claims to the very large fortune a relation of his mother's, who was recently dead in Russia, would be acknowledged without a law-suit or not, and he and his daughter be not only restored to the situation in life from which his imprudence had driven them, but be possessed of much greater opulence than they had ever known before. When he communicated these expectations to the earl, and showed him the clear and convincing documents on which they were founded, he exclaimed—"Is it possible, sir, that you never communicated this welcome intelligence to your daughter?"

"My lord, I am not much in the habit of writing to her now."

"But it must have given her such pleasure to hear of it on your account, if not on her own!"

"But why excite in her hopes which might end in disappointment?"

"True, and your forbearance, when I consider its motive, is exemplary. Still, it is so natural for a parent to confide his hopes to a beloved child! I could not myself have had such self-denial."

Nor would Mr. Brightwen in earlier days; his heart was narrowed in its interests, and its affectious and aversion to write letters was become stronger in him than his wish to make his child the sharer of his hopes. Thus sluggishness of feeling, not consideration for her, was the true cause of his silence.

"And when, sir, do you expect a final answer from the gentleman to whom you have applied?"

"In a month possibly."

"But you will, I conclude, go to London to receive it."

"Yes."

"Then, as I shall return home by London I will see you there, if you name your hotel, as I should like to be myself the bearer of the welcome news to your admirable daughter; in the meanwhile I will keep the secret." It was so settled, and the

earl having had the benevolent pleasure of finding when he reached London, that Mr. Brightwen's claims were acknowledged without litigation, was now returned to enjoy the delight of imparting it to Sophia herself. But when, after receiving the welcome of his wife and daughter, he turned to speak to Miss Brightwen, his power of utterance wholly failed him, his under lip quivered with emotion, and seizing her hand, he imprinted a kiss in silence on her cheek.

" Dear me! papa!" cried Lady Helena, " if mamma is not jealous, I am!"

" Why, I declare the sight of Miss Brightwen has brought tears into your eyes."

" What is the matter! what has happened dear Augustus!" cried the countess, " anything unpleasant concerning Miss Brightwen?"

" What of my father, sir?" said Sophia, turning very pale.

" My dear, young friend, forgive me," replied the earl; " I have nothing but

good news to impart;—your father will be here in a few days, and would take you away with him, but I will not allow it, and so I have told him."

"But he wishes to do so."

"That is not all, nor the best of my news. You are become a great heiress!"

"What!" screamed out Lady Helena, seizing his arm, while Sophia replied, shaking her head mournfully,—

"Aye, some fortune speculation I suppose has elevated us to-day, for us to be thrown down by another to-morrow."

"No, not so, nor will I part with your father till I have prevailed on him to put your fortune out of the reach of contingencies."

"What can you mean, my Lord?"

He then told her the circumstances, and while Lady Helena pirouetted round the room, with as much sylph-like agility as she did before she was in love, Sophia, in tearful silence, glided out of it, and did not return again for some time; when she did, her countenance was serene and

her manner as composed as usual—not so Lady Helena; she enjoyed Sophia's restoration to her rank in society, with even agitated delight, and not on her own account only, but because she knew the pleasure which it would give Lord Aston and Julia; nor can I help owning, that when Lady Helena's benevolent and affectionate feelings had exacted their dues, her less amiable ones exulted in the mortification which Miss Brightwen's great opulence would occasion Lady Villeroy.

The next day, for the first time, Lady Helena called her Sophia—a liberty which she had never hazarded in her adversity. Miss Brightwen had always felt the delicacy which had caused her to address her with such formal respect; and now equally felt the affectionate kindness which dictated this unusual familiarity; for it proved at once how eager she was to consider her as an equal in worldly point of view, having always been fond of acknowledging her in higher points as her superior.

"You are a noble creature, Lady

Helena," said Miss Brightwen, smiling to see by her countenance, that, after she had hazarded the appellation of Sophia, she was afraid she might have given offence, " and I conjure you never to call me Miss Brightwen again."

" Thank you! dear Sophia; but when will you call me Helena?"

" Never, except when we are quite alone; I am too proud to seem to value myself so much on my intimacy with persons of rank, as to take liberties with them in order to prove that intimacy. In private you shall be and always have been in my heart, my dear Helena; but before the world, self-respect will always make me call you Lady Helena.

" No, no, not always, should you come to call on me at Lady Villeroy's in Gloucester Place, and drive up to the door in your own barouche and four, and two out riders, I hope you will enter the room looking at me, if Lady Villeroy be present, with *unpetit air de protection*, and holding out your forefinger to my eager grasp, say

in a drawling voice, like Mansfeldt—Helena, dear, how are you ?"

" Well," replied Sophia, " when you imagine an improbable situation for me, it is only right to imagine an impossible conduct for me in that situation. You staying in Gloucester Place at Lady Villeroy's ! what should carry you thither ?"

" Not a stage coach again, believe me."

" But a carriage with a viscount's coronet on it will perhaps."

" Hush ! hush ! what an image ! Visions of glory spare my aching sight ! But here comes papa with two open letters in his hand."

The Earl now entered to inform them that Lord Restormel wrote to request the company of them all at Green Hills that week, and Mr. Brightwen to say that he would be at Laurel Grove in two or three days. " Therefore," said he, " I shall tell Lord Restormel that our visit to him must be delayed."

Sophia however begged it might not, as she could receive her father ; but as

Lady Helena made a point of her accompanying them to Green Hills, the Earl wrote as he at first intended.

Lord Restormel could not however be easy till he had come over in person, to ascertain the real causes of the delay, and to pay his compliments to the earl, from whom he met a reception equal to his most ardent wishes, while he saw in Lady Helena, whenever she conversed with him, a degree of lively effort, and happy emotion, and want of ease of manner, which made him hope that he was very far from being an object of indifference to her, and he was easily induced to prolong his visit till the next evening.

Mr. Brightwen in his letter to the earl, informed him that his late commercial speculation had totally failed, and that he had now forsworn all such speculations for ever: but that with part of the personal property which had devolved on him, he should purchase a large estate, and farm it himself; and that, said the earl laughing, he calls having forsworn speculation! But I

shall try to prevail on him to secure to you, Miss Brightwen, a sum of money which he cannot risk; and Sophia owned that for his sake such a step would be desirable. The meeting between the father and the daughter was an affecting one. They had last met beside the corpse of Sophia's sister. She had written to him, conjuring him to come without delay, or he might not see Louisa alive. But business still kept him away, and when he did arrive, all was over. This meeting, therefore, renewed for a short time the painful remembrance of the last; but present joy, with Mr. Brightwen at least, soon banished the recollection of past sorrow; and he had now still further good news to impart to Sophia. The gentleman who had bought his Norfolk estate had emulated, or rather exceeded him in thoughtless profusion and extravagance, and the estate being again on sale, Mr. Brightwen had bought it, and was then returning to the abode of his ancestors, and himself a much richer, and he hoped a wiser man than he was when he

lived there in splendour before; of the former assertion there could be no doubt, of the latter there was more than a little; but Sophia, on principle, looked on the bright side, and was delighted at the prospect of returning to dwell in those scenes endeared to her, even by mournful recollections. Her father had, however, the considerate delicacy to tell her, that if the idea of living at Rosewood was painful to her, for certain reasons, he would give up his purchase; but she assured him, that certain reasons made her wish still more to return thither, as she had not only she believed entirely conquered her attachment to the person, to whom he alluded, but was desirous of convincing herself and others that she had done so. Before they set off for Norfolk, whither Sophia chose to accompany her father, it was agreed that after a few days residence there, she should return to Laurel Grove, and accompany the family to Green Hills, and Lady Helena being curious to witness Sophia's return in opulence, to the abode which she had left in poverty, and to a neighbourhood where

she, as well as her father, had been so tenderly beloved, gladly acceded to their request that she would go with them.

" Do you remember Mr. Brightwen," said Lady Helena, " what Sterne says on being, as he assures us, at Rennes when the Marquis d'E— reclaimed his sword ?"

" Not exactly."

" It was an incident of good fortune which will never happen to any traveller but a sentimental one, that I should be at Rennes at the very time of this requisition! And I shall insert in my life, when I write it, that it was an incident of good fortune which could only happen to a sentimental traveller. Miss Brightwen knows what a sentimental traveller I am, and how choice in my choice of vehicles, that I should be with the Brightwens when being enriched, (not by trade I think, there the Marquis had the advantage of you Mr. Brightwen,) by an unexpected circumstance, they returned to resume possession of the abode of their ancestors ! what a fine paragraph that will

make! I really think it would be worthy of a person of my notorious benevolence, when I have finished my written life, to shorten my natural life, that I may the sooner gratify and edify my fellow-creatures by the sight of the former."

"I cannot bear," cried the countess, "to hear you talk of shortening your life, Helena, even in joke."

"Nor I to hear any one joke on such a subject," observed Mr. Brightwen, shuddering as he spoke; "nor could any one whom the chances of life had even caused one moment to deliberate on the expediency of committing such an action."

Lady Helena was shocked and silenced, and looking at Sophia, she saw she was of the paleness of death, while she involuntarily drew near her father and grasped his hand in her's. He smiled affectionately, and instantly changed the conversation: yes, changed it to the improvements he meditated in Rosewood, and the experiments in agriculture which he intended to make.

Experiments, thought Sophia, as she

sighed deeply; to think that the man who had just owned how desperate past rashness of the same kind had made him should so little have profited by experience as to be meditating an equally dangerous course.

"That man is incorrigible," observed Lady Helena afterwards to her father; "and do you not see, papa, that he has acquired such a habit of looking to the future, that he is at times quite regardless of the present; he sits absorbed in reverie, and of nails he has left his poor fingers none. Mem. to put down in my common-place book that speculators have no nails, and that they never say what fine weather it is to-day, let us enjoy it, but 'I wonder whether it will be fine to-morrow.'"

When the day arrived on which the travellers were to set off for Rosewood, a very elegant carriage, with four post-horses, drove up to the door, which Mr. Brightwen had purchased for the occasion; and as he once more handed his daughter into a coach of her own, no unpleasing tear trembled in his

eyes. Lady Helena was the only one of the party who was inclined to talk; her companions naturally enough were disposed to silence and reverie, while the past and the future so completely absorbed them, that the present passed almost wholly unheeded. The sight of London was, however, equally welcomed by all three.—Lady Helena and Miss Brightwen knew that they should there have the happiness of passing a few hours with Julia and Captain Fortescue, and Mr. Brightwen had business to transact relative to his new possessions.

When her friends were announced, Julia flew with delighted eagerness to their arms; but the change in her appearance alarmed them both, and they wondered either her father or her lover would allow her to continue her attendance on the former till it injured her health; but Julia assured them that her health was not at all impaired, and they both very soon discovered that her malady was of the mind rather than he body. Yet Fortescue was there—was an attentive

and evidently devoted lover! and Julia made no complaints, nor could Miss Brightwen directly or indirectly obtain from her any clue to the secret something which preyed on her damask cheek. Lady Helena and Sophia, therefore, left London again uneasy, but they could not tell why, while Fortescue persisted to assure them, that her ill looks were wholly caused, he was convinced, by anxiety concerning her father. "As to her coldness of manner towards me," added he, sighing deeply, "that I believe is owing wholly to the coldness of her nature, for though she does me the honor of saying that she loves me, their are times when, by her manner, I should think that her heart was closed against the admission of any feeling as glowing as that of love."

"This is strange! and very unlike the Julia we formerly knew!" said Lady Helena to Sophia.

"It is indeed!" she replied, "and something has occurred to occasion the change which Julia, from some mistaken

principle, conceals in her own bosom. In time, however, I hope she will be more communicative, but I, while I see her thus *deperir de jour en jour*, as the phrase is, I shall feel my own brightened prospects sadly overcast."

Poor Sir George insisted on seeing Lady Helena and Sophia for a short time, and Lady Villeroy had the mortification of hearing him declare that he was glad before he left the world to know that Miss Brightwen was at length as prosperous even in a worldly point of view, as her charms and her virtues deserved. As they left London very early, they reached Norfolk while it was yet light, and as their arrival was expected, they found most of the inhabitants of the village of Rosewood awaiting their approach. In spite of his lately acquired apathy, Mr. Brightwen's heart swelled almost to choking when he beheld the well-remembered scenes, and many a well-remembered face, while his eyes filled with tears, and his nod and bow of recognition were hurried and

embarrassed. Lady Helena soon caught the contagious emotion, and short sobs betrayed her sympathy with the feelings of her companions; but Sophia, on first reaching the village, clasped her hands expressively together; then hiding her face in her handkerchief, seemed employed for a few moments in prayer and thanksgiving.

"I never," wrote Lady Helena to Julia the next day, "beheld a countenance so radiant with a sort of holy satisfaction, or with such smiling benignity as our loved and revered Miss Brightwen's exhibited when she took the handkerchief from her face, and while in her sweetest tones she said—'Little did I ever think I should see this place and these poor people again, under such happy circumstances as the present! Oh! Lady Helena! my gratitude to the giver of all good is even overwhelming!' Her father did not speak, but he took her hand, and held it in his for some time, while the carriage at his desire went slowly through the village, and welcome, spoken and looked, met them

on every side, for the late possessor was deservedly unpopular, and Mr. Brightwen and Sophia had even been as deservedly beloved. As the carriage had nearly reached the park gates, we saw a gentleman in the dress of a clergyman, with a short, thick, dowdy-looking woman on his arm, stand up to make way for it, and Mr. Brightwen mutter between his closed teeth—'That scoundrel there!' while he turned round, and looked at Sophia, with an anxious enquiring, and particularly affectionate expression of countenance. It instantly occurred to me that this 'scoundrel,' as he called him, was Sophia's false and mercenary lover, the man who forsook her when fortune did the same, and married for money a woman he did not and could not love! 'Bravo!' said I to myself, 'here she is, returned splendid in fortune, scarcely impaired in beauty or in youth, and this odious man, with, no doubt, his ugly bargain on his arm, is here to witness her triumph, and feel his own punishment!' But how, I wonder, does

Sophia feel, and is she as heart-whole as she fancies herself? I instantly looked at her, and to my astonishment I heard her desiring the servant to tell the postilions to stop. Then, leaning out of the window, she said in her pretty manner to the reverend gentleman, who certainly looked very pale, and trembled from head, to foot! 'How are you Mr. Sumner? I hope all your family is well?' While the man bowed, stammered out something almost inaudible, and was too much thrown off his guard by her unexpected courtesy, and still more, perhaps, by her perfect composure of manner, so indicative of indifference, to remember to introduce dowdy Sumner his wife to her; but not one word of recognition, or one look but of disdain and aversion would Mr. Brightwen bestow on the man who had so basely deserted his child in her adversity; and I honored him for the parental feeling: however, on reflection, this feeling might not have been without a considerable alloy of selfish resentment, as his falsehood had

made Mr. Brightwen feel more acutely the injury he had himself done Sophia, as he by his extravagance had involved her in the poverty which deprived her of her lover. Be this as it may, I enjoyed and respected the gruff voice and haughty air with which papa Brightwen cried, 'Drive on postilions!' and obliged Sophia to give a parting bow to the unworthy object of her forgiving sweetness. 'Sophia! my dear! I am really quite astonished at you! What could you mean,' said Mr. Brightwen, 'by speaking to that fellow?' 'To prove to him and to myself that I have forgiven him; and also to shew him that he is now an object of such perfect indifference to me, that even the sight of him, after so many years absence and of suffering on his account, could not occasion any emotion in me; surely I was therefore right in doing what I did.' 'Perfectly so I think,' said I, 'and Mr. Brightwen when he considers how coolly and calmly you looked, and talked to the trembling, conscious wretch, will think so also.' 'Sophia!'

cried her father, 'I can only admire you—imitate you I cannot—and indeed I never can bear that fellow in my sight.' 'Oh, but you must, indeed!' replied she, 'my father must not resent even my injuries. It would be wicked as a Christian, it would be beneath him as a man.' 'Well put!' I observed, and unanswerable; 'and it would be making this person of too much consequence even to seem to remember what had passed. Depend on it his avaricious soul will be more punished and tortured by seeing you living in splendour at Rosewood, and Sophia in her unimpaired loveliness presiding there, while he is forced to drag the little dowdy about, for whose golden sake he gave up youthful love and happiness with it, than he could be by being forbidden your house.' 'I believe you are right, Lady Helena,' answered he after a pause, 'and the fellow shall visit us, that he may be tormented as he deserves to be.' Sophia shook her head at hearing such motives for admitting the man suggested, and followed; but she could not

utter what she thought, for we were now arrived at the house; and overcome with innumerable recollections and emotions she threw herself in an agony of feeling into the arms of her father, and he, though scarcely able to stand himself, lifted her out of the carriage, and laid her down on the first sofa he saw; after a pause of strong emotion he exclaimed—'How unchanged every thing appears in this room! (It was his library, and his own books, for every thing had been purchased as it stood) I declare that I can scarcely believe in the lapse of years, and could fancy that I had been dreaming ever since I saw these beloved objects last, and that we parted only last night! But what fine improvements I can make in this room! and in the park too! I am really impatient to begin!' He then, seeing Sophia was restored to composure, left the apartment to go over the house and speculate on those changes which he already meditated, and the conception of which had power to annihilate almost instantly, those honorable sensibili-

ties which, but a moment before, had endeared him to his daughter and me! The servants of the late possessor were still in the house, and we found every thing prepared for us, and in the most comfortable order. Sophia, therefore, proposed our retiring instantly to our apartments, and having put me in possession of mine, she begged me to excuse her for an hour or two, as she wanted to be alone; and when we met at a late dinner I saw that, though her countenance was then composed, her eyes were swelled with excessive weeping. The day after to-morrow I shall write again, dearest Julia, but for the present farewell! "H. F."

Lady Helena kept her promise, and wrote as follows:—

"Yesterday and to-day we have been visiting the poor, and the rich have been visiting us; but Mr. and Mrs. Sumner were not amongst them. I hope the man is too self-judged to volunteer the visit. The visits from the rich were very uninteresting; those to the poor delightful. I

may call them, many of them, Sophia's poor; for it is the very young alone who know her not, either by her bounties or her instructions, and they were so delighted to see her again! What an admirable wife for a parish priest she would have been! The man was a fool as well as a knave, my dear. I conclude, you knew that this Sumner was waiting for orders when Sophia and he first met, and that he has the living of this place; all things considered, I believe, he does his duty well, and is so eloquent and popular a preacher, that whenever a charity or other particular sermon is to be preached in the city, near this place, he is the bespoken preacher. Of his wife's merits we have heard but little. The cottagers are not much acquainted with them; they say they know her to see to—— but she is a poor sickly body, and has had a large family, and lie a good deal in bed.—A charming description! I fear my vindictive feelings against the husband were gratified by it. But let me describe him to you for Sophia's sake; I

know you will be glad to hear, that only of the man has she reason to be ashamed. His person is tall and manly, but his face is not handsome enough to make one suspect that our friend was captivated by exterior only; he is sallow, a little marked by the small pox; has good teeth, and an intelligent countenance; his greatest charm to me is his voice, that is sweet and clear, and I should call it insinuating; a voice full of inflections, and I dare say a most dangerous engine in the power of an artful man. No wonder, innocent unsuspecting sixteen as Sophia then was, could not withstand it, especially as it breathed forth no mean poetical effusions of the owner's brain, said, not sung I mean. So much for exteriors, if I may call a voice an exterior, and you will wonder how I can know so much of them—I will tell you: yesterday was Sunday, and we went to the parish church, that is Sophia and I, not her father; he declared it would make him abjure Christianity to hear that fellow preach it, and that his prayers would turn to curses on his lips.

'Then stay at home, good man; no, naughty man,' said I, 'and we will pray to your Maker to turn your heart.' 'Dearest father, for your own sake, forgive!' said Sophia. 'Well, well, in time, perhaps, I will.' 'I was very curious,' said she, as we returned home, 'to hear Mr. Sumner preach, I had heard so much of his powers, and I remember how very ambitious he always was to be what is called a fine preacher. 'And is he one,' said I, 'in your estimation?' 'He is exactly what the world calls so, and what the earthly ambition to be so, which he always expressed would make him.' 'But I suspect you are not satisfied with his preaching?' 'Oh, no, there is no teaching of the Spirit there; no unction; no preaching from the heart, it is all of the head; the action is graceful, but studied; the hand and arm are not raised involuntarily, and from an involuntary impulse as it were, but they rise because they are bidden, and I fear the inquisitive eye looks round to discover, not contrition, but admiration.' Julia, this woman is quite cured;

no remains of first love here. 'How just,' said I, 'is all you have observed: I did not like to give my own opinion, because I thought you might be mortified.' 'Why so?' 'Because it was natural that, in order to excuse your attachment to this man, you should wish him to appear a superior person in my eyes, and those of others.' 'No,' she replied, calmly smiling, 'I feel that at the time my attachment took place it was quite excusable; he had been to college, had distinguished himself there; had a heart apparently full of love, and a head full of learning and poetry: the charm of his voice I need not describe, you own you feel it. His manner I then thought charming, but now it appears to me artificial.' 'Oh, very,' said I. 'My father blames him,' she added, 'too severely; I can make great allowances for him. When my fortune was wholly lost, we could not expect to marry for many, many years. This living was filled by a young man, and Mr. Sumner had nothing; to be sure he needed not to have married another

woman directly.' 'And such a woman too!' 'But I must own,' she replied, 'that his falsehood pained me less on that account, as I was sure that he did not marry from love, but avarice; and though my sense of right was shocked, my self-love was gratified.' 'Natural, but wrong.' 'I grant it, and bitterly have I reproached myself for the unworthy feeling; however, I had lost him, whatever were his motives for marrying, and I was miserable; but why dwell on past misery? I think you will own that I am heart-whole now.' 'I do own it, and I think he must be convinced of it also, spite of his vanity.'"

The day after Lady Helena wrote thus:

"As we were walking this morning, most sudden and violent rain came on, and we had no umbrellas, nor was any house, save one, near us. 'Let us ask shelter at that house,' said I, 'who lives there?' 'Mr. Sumner,' replied Sophia.' 'Pshaw! then I had rather be wet,' cried I, peevishly. 'As you please, and this tree will shelter us, if not, here is a barn open.' In the

barn we found a nurse-maid, with a baby in her arms, and other children of different ages taking shelter also. You know, my love, I am very fond of babies. I was instantly devouring the fat, fubby, beautiful one before me! and dancing it in my arms, while Sophia was caressing and talking to the others; but really I thought I should have dropped the little love with loathing, when I heard the nurse say to my companion, 'They are Mrs. Sumner's children, madam.' I am afraid I did pinch the poor thing involuntarily, for it began to squall, and I was glad to get rid of it. Not so Sophia, she continued to smile on the bonny bairns most benignly, and even hoped Mr. and Mrs. Sumner were well. At this moment we heard a quick step, and a gentleman throwing open the door exclaimed, 'So here you are! I was afraid you would be wet, and therefore came to meet you with umbrellas, my dears!' It was Mr. Sumner. He started at seeing us, and betrayed such excessive emotion, that I could not but suspect he was not as heart-

whole as Sophia, and when I recollected his wife, I, even I pitied him. But Sophia was as composed as I was, and was able to compliment the poor man on his promising children; on which, (it is a fact, Julia,) I saw him turn away, with tears in his eyes! 'Well, now behold us leaving the barn, Sophia and I arm in arm, and Mr. Sumner carrying an umbrella over our heads.' For him not to offer us the shelter of his house would have been affectation, and for Sophia to refuse it; so behold us next seated by Mr. Sumner's fire-side, the lady in dishabille, and not in good humour, evidently displeased at having such visitors forced on her, and, I suspect, not a little jealous of Sophia, from whose sweet face poor Mr. Sumner, (see how rapidly I have promoted him! first the man, then the poor man, and now poor Mr. Sumner; he will be poor, 'dear Mr.Sumner next, I suppose;') where was I? Oh! from whose sweet face poor Mr. Sumner could, I saw, with difficulty remove his eyes. But, Sophia, I am sure, was wholly unconscious of it, and be-

lieved that he was as indifferent as herself. It is a very true saying, though often used by the profane in mockery, that "to the pure, all things are pure;" and so the said Sumner to Sophia Brightwen, but not to Helena Fortescue. 'Ergo!' 'None of your ergos, if you please, Julia, but let me go on.' Well, Mr. Sumner ordered sandwiches and wine, and Mrs. Sumner looked disordered thereat, as if she said, 'I shall never get rid of them, if they get to eating and drinking;' however, we could not stay for the eatables, for the man was forced to come to mistress for the key of the wine, and I heard the lad whisper something about stale bread: while we did stay, and that was merely owing to the pressing entreaties of the husband, for the wife did not press us at all. We tried to converse, when, lo! Mrs. Sumner found her tongue, and looking at Sophia with an expression of countenance which I cannot describe, after having, I thought, with an envious eye, surveyed the elegant mourning which Sophia wore, formed a striking con-

trast with her own rusty black, she said in a sort of spiteful falsetto—'Pray, Miss Brightwen, was not the last place you lived in Lady Villeroy's family? I think you were governess, or something there.' 'I was, madam,' coldly replied Sophia, colouring a little, while a deep indignant blush suffused my cheek, and shame (perhaps indignation also,) that of her husband! But, I suppose you were governess to this young lady last, Miss Liddy something, I think you called her; but you did not introduce us, nor Mr. Sumner neither, though he piques himself so much on his breeding, and I am told it is very ungenteel not to name folks to each other.' 'My dear,' said the poor man, looking as if he wished to say my plague, 'Miss Brightwen did not do me the honour to name her friend to me.' 'I am ashamed of the omission,' said Sophia; 'allow me now then to present you to Lady Helena Fortescue.' Oh! that you could but have seen her countenance, when she found out the supposed Miss Liddy something was a Lady Helena!

and the awkwardness with which she wriggled on her seat, and drawled out, 'I beg pardon, I am sure for what I said;' but the poor man looked ready to faint, not at finding out my rank, but at its effect on his wife, and the contrast between her insolence to Sophia, and her servile awe of me. She now, then, was quite sure Sophia had been my governess, and on her she had not yet vented all her spite. 'I suppose then, my lady, Miss Sophia is your governess.' 'No madam, I cannot boast of the honor of having had Miss Brightwen for my governess.' 'Honor, la!' 'Yes madam, honor and advantage too:--had she been so, I should have been a much better and wiser person than I am.' 'Dear me!' cried Mrs. Sumner, in a voice of incredulity. 'Yes, you may well cry dear me,' said Sophia; 'but Lady Helena is apt to depreciate herself and exalt her friends.' 'You know Miss Brightwen that I speak the truth, and that I am more in awe of your reproaching eye than of any thing in the world.' 'Well, really,' said Mrs. Sumner

tittering, 'this is so odd! but pray, my lady, if not your governess, what was Miss Sophy to you?' 'A friend and companion whom I equally love and reverence.' 'Aye, companion! I thought she was in some situation in the family.' I was beginning, 'I tell you madam,' when the literal Sophia interrupted me with one of her looks, and said, 'I will tell Mrs. Sumner the truth myself: when Lady Villeroy wanted my services no longer, Lord and Lady Erpingham and Lady Helena, kindly wished me to live with them, to read with Lady Helena, and make myself otherwise useful.' 'And this you call telling the truth, cried I, indignantly. No, Mrs. Sumner, no, all we required was, that she should be agreeable, not useful, and give us her company, not her services as she terms it. "Law! a cheap way of earning her living indeed. I wish any one would pay me for my company, and I am sure they should have it: pray what salary were you to have Miss Sophia?' 'The word money or salary was never mentioned between us, madam,'

said I, 'and now Miss Brightwen need no longer to be in any family in a situation which, in the eyes of the vulgar, may seem to degrade her, but which she has always exalted and made in the highest degree respectable. Miss Brightwen is now staying with us, and will, I hope, stay some time. 'Yes, she is rich now, they say.' 'But was she pennyless, we should covet her society, and respect her just the same. The loss of wealth, in the eyes of those capable of appreciating her worth, never could have deprived her of her value and her claims to respect; and the acquisition of fortune adds not one tittle to the esteem and respectful admiration which Lord and Lady Erpingham and myself have always felt for her ever since we beheld her, and have even been proud to testify to others.' You know me (and my manner, Julia, when my moral feelings are offended), and you may suppose that it had its full effect here. The wife was mortified, but *awed;* the husband struck to the heart, for conscience pushed the dart home, and he looked,

while a deep sigh issued from his bosom, as if he said to himself, 'And this was the creature I forsook!' And there sat the creature he married! I thought of the two pictures in Hamlet, and I had leisure to think, for my long speech frightened every one into silence; nay, Sophia was silly enough to shed a tear. I then, having done my beloved friend justice, and revenged her on her enemies, rose up majestically, and said as the rain was over, we would intrude on them no longer; no, not even to eat what, I dare say, was only a mutton sandwich after all, and which at last made its appearance. Sophia now approached Mrs. Sumner, and would have taken her hand, but she contrived to withhold it from her. 'I hope,' said she, 'that we shall see you and Mr. Sumner at Rosewood before we leave it?' 'Why, really, I am no great visitor, so I can't say.' 'Oh, certainly, certainly, we will have the honour to wait on Mr. B. and you,' cried the husband, with a flushed cheek and faltering voice, for which I gave him credit,

whatever his wife did; but I was not so satisfied with his evident endeavour now to catch the eye of Sophia, while his own had an expression full of former days, which he wished her to see. It was in vain, she did not look at him but with her usual grace and courtesy. She took leave of the children and the mother. One of the little ones, who had never stirred from Sophia's side, now put up her mouth to kiss her, and said, 'Don't to it.' 'Come away, and don't be troublesome,' cried Mrs. Sumner, 'that child is so fond of all strangers!' 'Will you kiss me,' said I, to the child? 'No,' hanging back, and clinging to Sophia. 'The child, then, has her favorites, I see, notwithstanding,' observed I, maliciously I own; then added, 'perhaps you would like to go with the lady?' 'Ies.' 'And not with me?' 'No, I sank you.' 'Come here when I bid you!' cried the angry mother; but the child ran to its papa, who snatched her up in his arms, and kissed her more warmly than I approved, as it seemed to be in conse-

quence of her fondness for Sophia. I felt it was time we were away, and Sophia was as silent as myself for some way on our road home. At length she said, 'Did I do right, Lady Helena, in asking them to Rosewood?' 'You could not do otherwise. It would have looked as if you were withheld by a certain consciousness.' 'So I thought; yet it is very sure that poor Mrs. Sumner does not like me, because she is jealous of her husband's having once been my lover. Yet, how absurd this is.' I did not agree with her, but I would not make her uneasy by saying so, therefore I said nothing. Sophia, when she resides here, will find out that Mrs. Sumner has some reason to be jealous, and then her sense of right will teach her what is proper to be done. What a long letter! I wish you would write to me hither as soon as you receive it, and tell me how you are. Your pale, pensive face haunts us; we are sure all is not right with you, and yet we know not what it is that is wrong! Shall we never know, though we love you so dearly?

Unkind Julia! but no, your silence can only proceed from mistaken kindness, as you are a kind, good creature, and the beloved friend,

of your ever devoted,

H. F.

END OF VOL. II.

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MUCH TO BLAME.

CHAPTER XVI.

Again she wrote, and as follows:—

"One letter more from Norfolk, and then, hey for home! and one other place, Julia! I really think I am very amiable in staying here so long without a murmur, considering the visit I have in prospect, and being so merry and cheerful too,—too merry, for I, you know, am never merry and wise. I am ashamed to tell you what I was caught doing yesterday; you must know that I was standing at a gate in the park, waiting for Sophia, when not supposing I could be caught, I amused myself, as you have often seen me, with jumping over this gate; not having been in practice lately, as I really am eighteen and a few

weeks, I was awkward at first, but at length I was as able as formerly to put my hand on the top bar and vault over! Courage, said I to myself, I am not an old woman yet! and so, delighting in my recovered agility, I went over and over, not looking to the right or left, when, as I alighted on my feet the last time, I beheld, with shame and confusion of face, the Rev. John Sumner, his curate, and the blushing Sophia!—the said John's expression of countenance I did not like, but then he is a man of this world, not of the other. His curate blushed celestial, rosy red, and modestly walked on, and the rector's blush, if he blushed at all, was any thing but celestial; but his words were a good lesson to me. 'I am glad,' said he, 'that your ladyship's exertions were not seen by any of my fair and young parishioners, as the example of a lady of quality is a seducing one, and might lead to broken bones, unless the conciousness of not being able to make so beautiful a display as Lady Helena Fortescue, might prevent such daring

exploits.' Now the first part of his speech was sensible, the second impudent:—what right had he to insinuate that he saw my ankles, and that they were good—but I had drawn the impertinence on myself; I therefore replied to the first part of the speech only; 'I thank you,' said I, 'for your reproof! Lady Helena Fortescue ought to set a good example only, and always, nor will she in future do when alone, and as she believes unobserved, what it would be dangerous or improper for any one to copy.' 'Indeed,' cried Mr. Sumner, 'I did not presume to censure your Ladyship.' 'But you ought to have done so, else why do you wear that coat and that shovel hat? their colour and shape invest you with a privilege which you ought to use, and admonish the giddy and the rash in whatever class of society you meet them. There, sir, there is my admonition in return for your's. He bowed gracefully, said something flattering, and I changed the conversation. Mrs. Sumner he said was ill, and could not accompany him:—for ill

I read sulky. He did not see the master of the house, as he was riding out; but he left his card, and I dare say the visit will be for some time at least unreturned. But, Julia, what have I done? oh, if it should ever be known at Green Hills that I was caught jumping over a gate, what would the consequence be! why, that though invited thither once, I should never be invited again.—What demon whispered in my ear, Helena, jump over that gate? I wonder whether I should have obeyed it, if I had not been sure of going to Green Hills.—I cannot answer that question—but this I know, that if I am not pretty behaved, and if I do not look at my Ps and Qs as the saying is, I shall never get to Green Hills a second time, spite of the obligations which a certain viscountess thinks she owes me. Heighho! well, here end my adventures in Norfolk. To-morrow we set off for Surrey and its beautiful hills; this place is very pretty; fine trees and water, but a dead flat, and our own hills are so lovely! I long to see them again; also, certain hills

which I saw the other day—can't you guess where? I also long to see, and kiss once more that dear, pretty, pale face, which I have long loved, and shall, I trust, love to my grave; can you guess whose face that is—not you, foolish child!—I have done.

" H. Fortescue.

" P. S.—Sophia writes for herself."

Oh! my joy at having seen with my own eyes that Sophia has quite conquered her first love, and that first loves, therefore, can be entirely conquered, when the feelings are under proper regulation, and the regulating voice of religion is allowed to be heard in the soul. I have had a letter from Aston; he found his wife too ill to be moved, so the journey to Nice is delayed. When the hour fixed for the departure of the Brightwens and their noble guest arrived, Mr. Brightwen had already so involved himself in business, and plans for improving his estate and house, that he declared to be unable to set off, and must make his way to London alone, and as well as he could. The ladies were, therefore.

obliged to go without him, a change which was not unwelcome to them, as the longer Mr. Brightwen remained in Norfolk, the longer was Sophia sure of staying with Lady Helena, and of accompanying her to Green Hills; for, till her father went to settle his affairs finally in Derbyshire, he would not require her attendance.

They found Julia as they left her, except that whatever was her secret cause for uneasiness, the sorrows of the daughter were now uppermost, as Sir George was declining fast. "But where is Marcus?" cried Lady Helena.

"I persuaded him to go to Laurel Grove," replied Julia, deeply blushing. "I thought the melancholy, monotonous life he led here was not good for him; I therefore sent him away," she added, forcing a smile.

"Amazing!" said Lady Helena, thoughtfully. "How could he be persuaded to leave you at a moment like this? and how could you be so unjust to him as to suppose he thought it otherwise than delightful to be with the woman he loves in the hour of

her affliction—to soothe and support her by his presence!—fie, Julia, fie! he does not deserve this from you."

Julia again tried to smile, but her lip could not; on the contrary it quivered with uncontrollable emotion, and she faintly replied, that she always dreaded becoming burthensome even to those she loved best, and she was very glad to send him to Laurel Grove.

Sophia, while this conversation passed, stood by silently and sorrowfully watching her countenance and manner, and soon after she led her into another room, in hopes of drawing from her the reason of the singular appearances which she observed; but she interrogated her in vain. Julia expressed her surprise that either she or Lady Helena should wonder at her lowness of spirits, when her father was so near his end, and at her want of selfishness in wishing the being she loved best to remove to a gayer scene, lest his health and spirits should be injured by witnessing daily her father's sufferings and her own;

and this was uttered with such a cold and firm manner, as if her determination to preserve a fixed silence was immoveable; that Sophia, conscious the attempt to obtain her confidence was fruitless, forbore to urge her further, and resolved to wait as patiently as she could, till time, the great revealer of secrets, should reveal this.

When Lady Helena and Sophia reached Laurel Grove, they found Lord and Lady Erpingham intended to set off in two days, time for Green Hills, and Marcus resolved to accompany them.

"You accompany us!" cried Lady Helena, when she was alone with him, "when poor Sir George has so few hours to live!"

"Is that certain?" said he, starting.

"So Julia tells me."

"Then what could she mean by sending me from her—I declare I cannot understand her; what does she mean—she makes me miserable; she seems to doubt my liking to be with her, and is at times so chilling in her manner, were I not sure

that she sees no one, I should think some one prejudiced her against me. Oh, Helena! I have not been used to be loved in this cold, repulsive manner."

"Perhaps not," replied Lady Helena; "but remember, Marcus, that the love which is so violent in its external seemings, is like the wide blazing-out flame of those candles you draw by, which soon burn out, consumed by their own violence. Whereas, a calm, gentle, pure love, like that of Julia, like a wax light, burns with steady, though bounded blaze, and will continue to burn purely and brightly to the last. The violent love which you prefer to her modest coldness, was not famous for its constancy, I think, Marcus?"

"I cannot bear any joking on that subject, Helena; but is it necessary that modest love should be cold?—would there be any harm in a woman's showing, beyond a doubt, that she returned the generous warmth of the virtuous attachment professed for her by an honourable man? besides, she was not always so cold as she now is,

and I sometimes suspect that she is really tired of me, and not afraid lest I should grow tired of her."

"This is strange and mysterious," said Lady Helena; "and I cannot understand it, but I do not approve of your going to Green Hills, and I feel sure that you are going more from pique than inclination."

"I believe so too." However, Fortescue could not put his design into execution, as he received a few hasty lines from Julia that day, saying, that she feared her father was dying, and conjuring him, as he wished to see him, to come to them as fast as possible.

"Is that a cold note, Marcus?" said Lady Helena, as she returned it to him.

"No; but grief softens the heart; however, I own, this note delights me, by the tenderness of its expression. Dear girl! I wish I could fly to her—horses are slow animals on such occasions."

Sophia wished much to accompany him to London, but could not, as she knew she would not be allowed to be the

guest of Lady Villeroy, and could not force herself, even during the day, on a woman who disliked her; but she agreed with Lady Helena, that it would be better for Julia, under all circumstances, to be thrown entirely on Fortescue for comfort and support; as nothing was so likely as the consciousness of that dependence to remove the coldness of which he complained, and to produce that confidence so necessary to the happiness, and continuing attachment of lovers. Before the party set off for Green Hills, they had the satisfaction of learning, by a hasty letter from Fortescue, that Sir George was better again.

As Lady Helena approached Green Hills, the vivacity which had amused her companions during the journey, and had delighted Mr. Brightwen and Sophia at Rosewood, was totally vanished, and she was silent, grave, and evidently absorbed in her own reflection; no wonder! for she who, when she last beheld that beautiful valley, was not allowed to explore its beau-

ties, because she was obnoxious to the possessor of them, was now coming to receive from that severe and dreaded woman, the tenderest welcome of an awakened and grateful heart—a welcome earned by her by the active and generous performance of the most trying duties of Christian love. Nor were her companions more inclined to converse than she was, for reflections, like her's, were in a measure present to their mind; and while a feeling of proud approbation of her conduct, swelled consciously in the bosom of her parents, they looked on her with delighted tenderness: and the tearful eye of Lady Helena fell under their overpowering gaze. She had scarcely recovered the emotion which had deepened the delicate tint of her cheek, when she saw the impatient Lord Restormel coming to meet them on horseback, every fine feature beaming with pleasure, and illumined by the blushes of triumph and satisfied feeling.

Lady Restormel, too full of emotion herself to preserve her usual state, came

forward even into the hall of entrance, to meet her noble guests, and while her arms opened to receive and welcome Lady Helena, her full heart deprived her tongue of utterance, and the meeting and the greeting passed in expressive silence—a silence which the heart of each understood and enjoyed.

Lord Restormel, meanwhile, evidently full of unutterable emotions himself, stood looking on, unable to follow the earl, and countess, and Sophia; and when his mother released Lady Helena from his arms, he seized the hand of the latter, and pressed it, unreproved, to his lips and his heart.

"I know you will pardon our neglect of the usual courtesy to guests," said Lady Restormel, as she now followed Lady Helena into the drawing room, "on account of the feelings which could alone occasion it; and you cannot doubt that you are welcome to Green Hills!"

"The feelings to which you allude are guarantees of that," replied Lady Erping-

ham; "and my lord and I are never sorry to be neglected for Helena."

"How you flatter that girl," said the earl, laughing: "I assure you I am not so humble, countess. It is not so pleasant to be neglected for any one!"

Lady Helena thought the same, for at that moment she felt herself neglected for Miss Brightwen, and she did not like it!

The animated manner in which Lord Restormel was now welcoming Sophia, and the admiration with which his eyes were fixed on her face, gave a jealous pang to her heart, and she feared she had brought a rival with her. She forgot that those who are dear, or distinguished by the object of our love, become instantly objects of interest to us, therefore she failed to see that if Lord Restormel welcomed her friend with such eager pleasure, it was from the charm that her being Lady Helena's friend threw over her, and that even Sophia shone to him with only a borrowed light! But the love which is not quite sure of being happy love, is always timid and dis-

trustful, and by the time that the ladies retired to dress, Lady Helena had convinced herself that Lady Restormal, spite of gratitude, would still never approve of her for the wife of her son; and that the daily contemplation of a woman who excelled in all the modest and feminine graces, and who had, she knew, gained such great power over her father, and her brother, was very likely to obtain equal ascendancy over Lord Restormel, and with the approbation of his own judgment. It was therefore with a heavy heart that Lady Helena retired to her own apartments, nor could she summon resolution to dress, but leaning her head on her hands, she sat for some minutes lost in painful contemplation: while thus engaged, she heard herself called, by a soft yet manly voice, beneath an open window which led into a balcony. It was Lord Restormel's voice! and starting up with agreeable trepidations, she hastily brushed the gathered tears from her eyes, and hastened into the balcony, whence she saw him looking up at her, with eyes whose

expression could not be mistaken, and holding up to her a nosegay of the choicest flowers! "Will you deign to accept my offering!" cried he. "I bade these flowers bloom till you came, and for you; that was all I asked of them, and they have obliged me."

"Oh, they are beautiful! but how shall I get them, I will send Gibbs down for them."

"No, let me bring them to the door of the dressing-room."

"I am sorry to give you so much trouble."

"Trouble!"—The word was nothing—but the tone, the look with which it was said, carried peace and joy to Lady Helena's bosom. The nose-gay was brought and received with blushing consciousness on both sides. Lady Helena, all smiles and bustle, now summoned Gibbs to commence the work of the toilet directly; and when with her nose-gay in her bosom she entered the saloon, and especially when she saw that she alone was decorated

with flowers, all her jealousy vanished, and again, before her view—

"Hope enchanting smiled and waved
her golden hair!"

The enchantment was encreased when Lady Restormel said, "How is this Charles? you have neglected to give a bouquet to Lady Erpingham and Miss Brightwen!"

"I fear," he replied, consciously blushing, "that I have almost exhausted all my best flowers for Lady Helena, but I will see." Accordingly he disappeared in the conservatory which joined the drawing-room, and returned with some flowers like those he gave her; but, as if still resolved that she should out-bloom the others, he brought a scarlet camelia, which he begged her to wear in her dark tresses.

"You might have brought one for Miss Brightwen, my lord," said the earl, "it would become her dark tresses also!"

"But Miss Brightwen, sir, is in mourning," was his reply:—and Lady Helena no longer jealous, was satisfied that if Sophia had not been in mourning, no camelia would

have been brought for her. The evening was one of intellectual enjoyment, for every one present enjoyed, and was formed for intellectual conversation, and as Lady Helena's vocal powers were inconsiderable, and her instrumental ones not much beyond them, and as Sophia had no musical knowledge whatever, the conversers were spared the pain of being interrupted in an interesting conversation by the usually unwelcome news that they were to be favored with a song. The evening was spent chiefly in the library—one of rare books—and on the tables of which were drawings by various masters, and portfolios of the rarest prints—while on the top of the books were ranged portraits by the first masters of those time-honored men, whose immortal minds were yet surviving in the instructive and entertaining works beneath them. It is delightful to turn from perusing a splendid passage in an author, to contemplate the face of him who produced it; and no one enjoyed this delight and this opportunity more than

Lady Helena. Innumerable sallies of playful wit or deep feeling therefore were elicited from her mind by the circumstances which surrounded her, and except when Lord Restormel particularly addressed her, her conversational powers never shone with greater brilliancy, till suddenly observing Lady Restormel's eyes intently and almost mournfully fixed upon her, her animation fled, her power of expression failed, and drawing her chair close to the table, she tried to hide her changed feelings by looking over some engravings from Vandyke. But why were her feelings changed? Because she fancied that Lady Restormel thought her too brilliant, and that, for her age, she came too forward in society—was too ready to give her opinion, and gave that opinion too positively, nor could she help contrasting her own readiness to harangue and to reply, with the modest reluctance, to speak and to decide, evinced by Miss Brightwen, whose judgment was, she knew, a judgment to rely on, and whose riper age and

maturer character gave her a greater right to do both with promptness and self-complacency. Her ever tender and watchful mother beheld her change of countenance, and was alarmed at her silence. Lord Restormel also observed both, but he dared not remark or enquire into the cause of either. He was therefore glad when the countess said—" Helena my love, what ails you on a sudden, are you not well ?"

" Oh ! yes, quite well," she answered, deeply blushing, " but it occurred to me that I had talked too long and too much, and that I had not been as much of a listner as it becomes my years and acquirements to be."

" I should have thought so too, perhaps, to borrow the elegant words of our late royal master to Dr. Johnson, if you had not talked, so well," said Lady Restormel smiling, and approaching Lady Helena as she spoke, then leaning affectionately on her shoulder, while she examined the print before her.

"But why, Lord Erpingham," she continued, "should not the young be encouraged to put forth their ideas? It is so delightful to contemplate the fresh and unsophisticated impressions of early youth! I declare to you that Restormel's speeches in the House, are not more interesting to me than his boyish and youthful observations, and *èpanchemens du cœur*, when nature and life were new to him, and I encouraged him to express all that he felt."

"But would this untaught eloquence have pleased you so well if intruded upon you by the child of another?"

"Perhaps not—yet wherefore?—The sight of nature and *le verd naissant* is equally lovely, whether it be seen in your park or mine."

"True, and what is more lovely than *le verd naissant*?" replied the Earl.

"Aye, and equally lovely is *le verd naissant* or budding green of the mind, my lord."

"But its autumnal tints are richer and more splendid!"

"Yes, but not so purely bright; like the consumptive cheek, they owe much of their beauty to decay, and time, which has added to their charm, has also injured their strength and their vividness. No, give me that freshness of hue and feeling, over which, as yet, the canker worm of care and sorrow has never crawled, polluting and deadening even where it does not gnaw and destroy; give me the heart-felt and glowing feelings and sentiments of this dear may-morning girl, she added, passing her hand over Lady Helena's fine forehead as she spoke, I like them far better than my own autumnal ones, and I am content to listen while she talks." Away fled Lady Helena's gloom and silence! she kissed the caressing hand as it glided off her brow, and with *le verd naissant* for her text, she amused herself and her auditors by her fancy and her illustrations. When she retired to rest that night, it was with feelings too full of ex-

citement to allow her to sleep soon, but when she did, her rest was sweet and her dreams happy.

The next evening Lady Helena, though allowed to talk as much as she pleased by her hostess, was unusually silent, for her heart would not let her converse—that heart was full, and full of treasures, namely, convictions of the excelling worth of the man she loved. Lady Restormel had driven Lady Helena in a low chaise round the grounds and the domain herself—a distinction of which the latter felt the full force—and while she admired the neatness and comfort of the cottages, and the admirable regulations of the infirmary, and schools for children and for adults, Lady Restormel had a mother's pride in saying, "All this is Retormel's doing! when he came of age he brought this addition to the property, and ever since he has laboured till he has brought every thing to the perfection which you see! Well, indeed, may I say of my son, in the words of scripture, 'that when the ear hears him, then it blesseth him, and when the eye

sees him, it gives witness to him, because he delivers the poor that cry, and the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him, and causes the widow's heart to sing for joy.'" Lady Restormel's voice faltered as she uttered this eulogy on her son, and Lady Helena could not speak a word.

"Now then," said Lady Restormel, "that I have shewn you all these interesting objects, and done that justice to Charles which he would have been too modest to do himself, I shall give you up to him for the rest of the drive, and take his present companions to see what I have shewn you. Here Restormel," she added, as the barouche in which he was came up, "hand me into your vehicle, and take my seat beside Lady Helena!" He did so, but they drove for some time in almost unbroken silence. Lady Helena wished to commend him, but could not. He wished to ask how she liked what she had seen, but dared not; besides, the conscious happiness each felt in being with the other, was alone sufficient to dispose them to silence,—till Lady Helena,

ashamed of her tell-tale silence, forced herself to speak of the pleasure she had just enjoyed, and gave him an opportunity of commending that admirable mother who had gone hand in hand with him in all his plans, and had ever given wise council, if she had not superintended and executed what he wished. But Lord Restormel's praises of his mother were not likely to raise Lady Helena's spirits, nor provoke her to converse; on the contrary, they subdued and appalled her; for the stronger and the more just she found his attachment to that excelling woman, the less likely he was to disregard her opinion in his choice of a wife, or when married, to make the woman happy who should not conform in every thing to his mother's views of what a wife should be. But at her time of life, gloomy anticipations of the future have not power long over the pleasures of the present moment, and delighted with each other, Lady Helena and her companion prolonged their drive till there was only just time enough to dress before dinner was on the

table. That evening Lady Helena and Lord Restormel talked apart more than they had yet ventured to do; but as I before observed, the former could not converse as she had done the preceding evening; yet, though not so animated and even pensive, she went to rest happier than she was the night before.

The next morning, Lord Erpingham in no little agitation, brought a letter sealed and bordered with black into the room where Lady Restormel, the countess, and Lady Helena were sitting, which he had just read, and in which Lord Aston announced the death of his lady. Lady Erpingham instantly burst into a paroxysm of tears! and Lady Helena also betrayed considerable emotion while the earl expressed his reluctance to shorten so agreeable a visit, but was sure, he said, that Lady Restormel would see the necessity of their returning home the next day, to prepare for the reception of Lord Aston and his children, and the remains of the deceased. From this imperious necessity

there was no appeal, and Lord Erpingham left them to go in search of Lord Restormel and Sophia, who were walking together; when he was gone, the countess loudly lamented the death of Lady Aston, and worked herself into an agony at the idea of the misery her poor, dear Aston was feeling at that moment.

"No doubt," said Lady Restormel, "he must feel a good deal at first."

"She was the mother of his children," observed Lady Helena.

"Aye, and a most tenderly beloved wife too, Helena. I assure you, my dear friend, there never was a better or a more devoted husband than Aston, or a more excellent wife than poor Emily! Oh, he will be so wretched!"

"Oh! he will recover it," cried Lady Helena.

"But when, Helena? not for a very long time I am sure; he will take it so to heart!"

"He will not grieve very long, depend on it, dear mamma," replied Lady Helena smiling through her tears in spite of herself,

and with an archness of expression which struck Lady Restormel as meaning more than was uttered; and taking her by the arm, she led her into another apartment.

"What does that smile mean, thou dear April-eyed being?" said Lady Restormel.

"That mamma is mistaken, and that Aston will even feel more relieved than grieved."

"So I suspected; for I never before heard that Lady Aston was so amiable and excellent as your kind mother describes her to be."

"No, certainly not; but to mamma's indulgent and generous mind, all persons and objects appear as through a *camera obscura;* and the most common-place persons acquire a beauty they do not really possess, from the medium through which they are viewed."

"True, but this mode of viewing things has its advantages; for instance, if Lord Aston should be as injudicious in a second choice, as he was in his first, your mother would not see the deficiencies of the

lady—but fancy her all she ought to be."

"If Aston marries, as he will, I think, wish to marry," replied Lady Helena eagerly, "there will be no deficiencies in the lady whatever; but she will adorn the coronet, and not the coronet her."

"What!" cried Lady Restormel, "am I to understand, that Lord Aston's second choice was made before the death of his wife?" Lady Helena was shocked, but she had gone too far to recede; she therefore gave Lady Restormel an account of the circumstances relative to Lord Aston, as before related."

"Then you really wish your brother to form a *mêsalliance;* do you, Lady Helena?" cried Lady Restormel, as soon as she had concluded.

"I do not consider it as a misalliance. Miss Brightwen, on the mother's side, is of a noble family, and on the father's descended from a very old family in Norfolk. Your ladyship knows that no fault of her own degraded her from her rank in society, and

that she is now restored to it by the acquisition of an hereditary property, large enough to make her an heiress worthy of a ducal coronet.

"I did not know; not but that I care more for family than wealth, though the world will only consider in this case the wealth, and neither the rank nor the virtues of the lady. I know you will believe me when I say that I rejoice to hear Miss Brightwen is so well born, as that removes all my objections, and makes her the most desirable of wives for a nobleman in my estimation; as there is no fear of her disgracing the rank to which she is elevated by any unbecoming eccentricity or unfeminine daring in her conduct or mind, but on the contrary her perfect manners and well tried virtues will reflect lustre on her station, and she will be what a British peeress ought to be." Lady Helena, though pleased to hear that her future sister-in-law, as she delighted to consider her, was approved by Lady Restormel, felt her eye involuntarily fixed on the ground,

and her colour change, for she feared that her noble hostess meant obliquely to censure her, while she applauded her friend; however, she did not choose to apply the censure to herself by noticing it, and she forced herself to say, with tolerable calmness, that after all Miss Brightwen might refuse Lord Aston.

"She is not at all attached to him as yet, of that I am sure," said Lady Restormel, "or I could not think so highly of her as I do."

"No, nor is she at all conscious of his attachment to her, even that consciousness would, I feel, have impaired the spotlessness of her character."

"True and delicately felt; but see, here she is! and has evidently been weeping."

"Oh, poor Lord Aston!" cried Sophia, as she entered, "I am so sorry for him! how he will suffer!"

"Who tells you so?"

"Lady Erpingham! she says he was so attached to Lady Aston!"

"But I told you the contrary, and you know I see clearer in some respects than mamma, as I have not her good nature to blind me."

"Well, but he must feel her loss, and the suddenness of her death."

"Yes, certainly, but he will recover it much sooner than mamma thinks."

"However, Lady Helena I am very glad he is coming immediately to Laurel Grove."

"So is he, I dare say."

"No doubt, for there he will be soothed and comforted."

"To be sure he will."

"We shall all do our best to support him under his trials; and I hope my father will not call me away for some months yet, on poor Lord Aston's account."

"You do! that is very kind in you, and I dare say Aston will find you a great comfort to him."

"I shall endeavour to be so, for many near and dear reasons," replied Sophia, sighing.

"And no doubt you will succeed in your endeavours," said Lady Helena, in so queer and comical a tone of voice, that she made herself as well as Lady Restormel smile, and they were both forced to turn away to hide their countenances from the unconscious Sophia. But this was almost the last tendency to smile, experienced by Lady Restormel that day, on account of the unexpected departure of her guests, which was fixed for noon on the following day.

Lord Restormel, next morning, was dressed and ready to attend Lady Helena and Sophia, according to appointment, in a walk round the grounds before breakfast. The weather was cold, and the trees leafless, two disadvantages of which poor Miss Brightwen was fully sensible, but her companions saw only each other, felt nothing but the delight of being together, and when she assured them it was, indeed, the breakfast hour, she could with difficulty convince them that she spoke the truth.

After breakfast, and while Lord and Lady Erpingham were writing letters to meet Lord Aston in London, Lady Restormel asked Lady Helena to accompany her in a drive, as she was obliged to visit a poor invalid, and wished to have her company part of the way. Lady Helena gladly prepared for the drive, and having handed his mother and her fair guest into the chaise, Lord Restormel followed them on foot.

Lady Restormel, who seemed absent and agitated, now took the road which led to the Reed House; and when they reached the well-remembered gate, the servant unlocked it, and Lady Restormel said, "We will alight here, if you please." They did so, and Lady Helena found herself sitting, by the invitation of the mother, on that very seat which not many months ago, she had so reluctantly, and with such conscious trepidation, occupied by the side of the son. She was full of conscious trepidation now, but it was of a pleasanter nature; she awaited with more hope than alarm at

what the equally agitated Lady Restormel was, she saw, about to say: "You have been here before," she said, at length.

"I have; but much against my will."

"Yes, and you refused to point out certain desirable alterations, because you never chose to give an opinion concerning aught belonging to another."

"True; but how strange that you should know even the words I used."

"No; not when you recollect to whom they were spoken, and that the memory was that of the heart. Now, therefore, that you may have no scruples to prevent you from suggesting whatever alterations your taste points out, I give you this reed house; it is your property henceforth, and so are the trees around it."

"Lady Restormel! do I hear you aright?"

"You do, indeed; and I have also to say that there is an addition to, and an improvement in these scenes which you, and you alone can give; but hither comes Restormel, and to him I leave further

explanations." All this was uttered with a faltering voice and hurried manner, which communicated equal emotion to Lady Helena; but she little knew why Lady Restormel had brought her thither, and in order to speak what she did on that very spot. It was to substitute in her own, and in her son's mind, an agreeable association with that scene, for a disagreeable one; she had there spoken slightingly and unjustly of Lady Helena, and there she had now made, she trusted, sufficient amends to the beloved being whose feelings she had then wounded; for she had now contrived to make that very place the scene in which he would probably exchange the vows of mutual and happy love.

As soon as Lord Restormel entered the Reed House, Lady Restormel told Lady Helena she should call for her again in half an hour, and proceed on her drive. "May I not—should I not go with her?" said Lady Helena, scarcely knowing what she said, but moving towards the door.

"Do you not see why my kind mother left you alone with me," said Lord

Restormel, gently forcing her back again on the seat; "do you not guess the meaning of her last words when I appeared?"

Lady Helena did not attempt to reply; she could only look down, and tear into numberless pieces the flower she held in her hand; no doubt she did not remain silent till Lady Restormel returned, for when that lady re-entered the Reed House, she found her sitting with her hand clasped in Lord Restormel's, while he was looking up in her blushing, but not averted face, with a countenance of happy and admiring love. At sight of her they both rose, and Lord Restormel leading Lady Helena up to her, said, "Bless us, bless us together, dearest mother; if Lord Erpingham consents, I am the happiest of men."

An involuntary sigh burst from the bosom of Lady Restormel as he uttered these words, but a smile of heartfelt tenderness succeeded it, while she folded them both in her maternal embrace, and raising her eyes to heaven vainly endeavoured, for some moments, to give other utterance to

the blessing which her heart invoked, than that evinced by the fast quivering lip. Yet Lady Restormel had intended to be very eloquent, and to address them in words of solemn, affecting import—words not soon to be forgotten, but her heart more eloquent than her tongue, at once annihilated the prepared address, and told its own impressive dictates in tears, in silent prayer, and in affectionate embraces. "Now, then, to drive you home again," said she, when she had recovered her composure; but Lord Restormel would not allow it; it was, he said, their last walk together for some time, and Lady Helena must return with him.

It may be supposed that Lady Restormel had reached the house long before the lovers did, but as soon as they did arrive, Lord Restormel went in search of Lord Erpingham, Lady Helena to the apartment of her mother; the latter had nothing to reply to her beloved child's communications but congratulations and expressions of sympathizing pleasure, mingled, however, with tender regret at

thoughts of losing her. But different was the reception which Lord Restormel's proposals met from the earl; to the great disappointment of the lover, he assured him that though he and his offers were all the tenderest, and most mercenary parent could desire for his child, he had always resolved that Lady Helena should not marry till she was one-and-twenty, and that all he could do to show how much he approved the marriage now offered to her acceptance, was to depart in some measure from his resolution, and permit her to marry at twenty. "You know, Restormel," said he, "that Helena has not yet been presented; she has not had those opportunities of seeing and choosing for herself, which all young women, whose lot is cast in the world, ought to have before they settle for life, as it is called. I have no doubt but the more she sees of other men, the more she will feel your superiority; but though I am her father, I should not think I did her or you justice,

if I suffered her to become a wife, till by a longer collision with the habits of others, Helena had lost some of her own bad habits, the result of an erroneous education, or rather in some points no education at all."

"Oh! but her own fine understanding, and my wishes surely would correct."

"My wishes and my authority, my lord, have not entirely done so; and believe me that a married life begins under bad auspices, where the husband has a prospect of being forced to assume the character of a censor with his bride. Trust me, that I know Helena, and believe me that you will hereafter bless me for insisting on this delay, and that your present pain will insure your future felicity."

"I am surprised, mortified, and disappointed, my lord; but you allow me to consider myself as the engaged lover of Lady Helena."

"Why, not exactly so; I cannot, will not admit of an engagement on either side; you shall meet, and on lover's terms, as

often as you choose; but you shall both be free, and either shall be permitted to break off an intercourse which shall have become undesirable to either."

"I do not like your conditions, Lord Erpingham; but I am sure of my own constancy, therefore I shrink not from accepting them, and if the most tender and devoted attentions can make Lady Helena constant at the end of—— how long is the probation, my lord?"

"Only a year and a half."

"Well, then, in a year and a half I I hope to be the happy husband of your daughter."

"I trust you will be so, but to use a favourite phrase of Helena's, '*ne gagez pas!*'"

"Do not lay a wager."

The two lords then went in search of Lady Helena, whose countenance fell, as if she was oppressed with secret forbodings when she heard her father's conditional consent to the marriage, and her lover was consoled to find that the delay was as

painful to her as to himself; but it was from different reasons, for Lady Helena knew herself, and could indeed have replied to her lover's confiding hope as her father did, '*ne gagez pas.*'

Lady Restormel, on the contrary, highly approved the earl's decision in her heart, though she contented herself with saying, "There can be no appeal from your authority and decision, my lord, and I doubt not but the delay will be salutary."

Lady Erpingham murmured and wondered, but always inclined to yield her judgment to that of her lord's, she did not attempt to offer an objection, and Miss Brightwen did not feel herself justified in giving an opinion on the subject. Lord Erpingham's resolution was strengthened by his knowledge, how much and how justly, in some respects, Lady Restormel had been prejudiced against Lady Helena, and by his conviction that though powerful circumstances had converted her aversion into affection, yet that his daughter was too like her former self to make her sure

of retaining the mother's affections, however she might continue to charm the fancy of her son; and a mixture of pride and principle, and a knowledge of human nature, made him resolve to secure to each of the lovers an opportunity of escaping those fetters which might at length become burthensome.

CHAP. XVII.

As Lord Aston, with his melancholy train, was expected so soon, Lord Restormel did not accompany his departing guests to Laurel Grove, though he was allowed to drive Lady Helena the greatest part of the way. With him vanished Lady Helena's vivacity; not that she was subdued in spirits by merely parting with him, because she knew that they should soon meet again either in town or country; but that she was then at liberty to indulge in her own reflections—her own blighted expectations; for though the beloved of Lord Restormel's heart, and his acknowledged choice, conscience whispered to her bosom that she was not the wife which either his own judgment or that of his mother would have chosen, and dark undefined fears for the future, clouded over, if they did not absolutely annihilate her prospects.

"Helena, my dearest child! why are you so absent and so sad?" said Lady Erpingham.

"So reflecting, I trust, you should say," observed her father gravely. "Helena has to-day taken on herself new obligations; she has in her heart at least plighted and accepted the most important of all vows save one, that at the altar; and the woman who knows that an amiable and honorable man has entrusted his happiness to her keeping, ought to reflect, for she has to weigh well her conduct in future, and to take heed to her steps;—am I not right Helena? are you not sad because you feel deeply and properly the responsibility which you have incurred?" Helena's heart was full—she could not answer, but she pressed her father's hand, and inclined her head in token that he was right. It was fortunate for Lady Helena's peace, and a fine trait in her character, that she was always able to forget herself in the interests of others; and the next morning, her own disquiets were swallowed up in the

preparations she made for the reception of Lord Aston and his children, and for their future accommodation. Lady Helena was the only person in the family whose expectation of Lord Aston was one of nearly unmixed pleasure, for she knew the state of his heart, and she had never liked Lady Aston, because she had always thought her unworthy of her brother, and she knew also that she made him miserable. When he arrived, however, and gave his motherless children to her arms, her awakened feelings towards them, made her shed unfeigned tears, though they were not tears of tender regret for the deceased, and without any hypocrisy on her part, she appeared a mourner with the rest. Lord Aston himself, from mixed feelings, and various causes, betrayed considerable emotion and agitation on his arrival, both of which were attributed, by all observers but his sister, to grief for the loss he had sustained; and Fortescue, who arrived just before him to attend the funeral, but returned to London again directly, was

surprised to witness such evidences of strong feeling, as if of regret in his widowed brother, which the merit of the wife he had lost did not at all in his opinion call forth. But no subsequent violence of emotion in Lord Aston's manner excited any observation, or wonder in those around him; and when the interment was over, no one but Lady Erpingham could have remarked that his countenance was more serious than usual; but as she over-rated the merits of the deceased, it was natural that she should over-rate the grief of her husband; while Miss Brightwen, from respect to Lord Aston, because she thought that it was wrong for the husband of so tender a wife to be soon consoled, tried to see with the eyes of the countess, and to impute Lord Aston's occasional absence of mind, though his eyes were often fixed on her the while, to regret for the companion whom he had lost. And she was confirmed in this opinion, when, after Lady Aston had been dead two months, she suddenly came upon Lord Aston, in a bower in the garden, and

found him gazing on a picture very intently, and then saw him press it to his lips. On observing this, Sophia instantly retreated, unwilling to interrupt him in these moments of tender recollection; for she naturally concluded that the picture was that of his wife. She would, however, have still more hastily retreated, had she known whose picture it was.

Lord Aston was now eager to resume his morning walks with Sophia, before breakfast, in spite of the coldness of the season, and his mother's fears for his health: but, as his circumstances were now changed, she was not often willing to indulge him, even though the death of his wife was an event too recent to make it possible that there could be any great impropriety in such walks, she was, however, much more willing to oblige Lord Aston by taking notice of his children, those children named after her beloved brother, and whom that circumstance tended to endear to her, and she could not but observe that whenever those interesting children were the objects

of her attention and caresses, that the father's countenance beamed with affectionate delight, and that his eyes were fixed on her with an expression which hers were unable to meet. And yet, thought Sophia to herself, I caught him caressing his wife's picture! To be sure it is my own conceit alone that thus embarrasses me when he looks at me! But was it his wife's picture? Yet, if not, whose should it be? The truth was, that soon after the funeral of his lady, Lord Aston asked Lady Helena whether she had given the picture he had intrusted to her care to Miss Villeroy.

"Certainly not," was her reply. "I was only to give it to Fortescue's bride, not Miss Villeroy."

"True, then give it to me again."

Lady Helena obeyed; and restored it, with no comment, but a smile of great meaning and pleasure, accompanied by a pressure of the hand, which was forcibly returned, and which spoke all which circumstances then warranted. I need not

add, that it was on this picture Sophia found Lord Aston gazing. Not long after this circumstance had taken place, she mentioned it to Lady Helena, as a proof of Lord Aston's tender attachment to his wife's memory; and the ambiguous expression of the latter's countenance, embarrassed her exceedingly.

"You do not reply, Lady Helena, and you look, I cannot say how."

"Very likely; but my dear friend, are you sure that it was Lady Aston's picture?"

"If not hers, whose should it be?"

"Aye, whose indeed? You know I told you he gave me yours to give to Julia."

"Yes, and if not, it could not be; that is, no, surely not."

"I do not quite comprehend you, Sophia; you do not speak with your usual clearness; but, who knows but my brother may have a picture we know not of. Those Italian women are very charming."

"An Italian woman's picture! and gaze

on it so soon! do you remember how recently his wife died?"

"Yes, and also how long she lived with him too,—quite long enough, to make the contemplation of another face very agreeable to him."

"Fye, Lady Helena, you really do not do your brother justice."

"Oh, yes, I do, and I am convinced, to speak seriously, that the picture was that of a virtuous English lady."

"Do you know, or only suspect this?"

"I may say, I am sure of it."

"But so soon to form a new attachment?"

"I did not tell you it was a new attachment."

"Worse and worse!"

"My dear Miss Brightwen, you are a wise woman, but not at all quick-sighted; nevertheless, and I challenge you to walk with me directly to yonder bower!" Sophia consented; and as Lady Helena had foreseen, there was Lord Aston with the picture in his hand.

"O! Brother! Brother! what are you

doing?" cried Lady Helena, as she entered, "what idol are you worshipping there? see! Miss Brightwen is shocked at your heathenish, or catholic proceedings!"

Lord Aston, who had only smiled when his sister first spoke, and had not tried to conceal the picture, started and blushed, when he saw by whom she was accompanied,—but still, he was so slow in returning it to its hiding-place, that Sophia had sufficient time to see that it was the miniature of herself! and overwhelmed with an embarrassment too mighty to be concealed, yet one, which every feeling of delicacy and propriety made her desirous of concealing—she suddenly quitted the bower, and luckily seeing Lord Aston's children approaching, ran forward to meet them—glad of such an excuse for leaving her companions. From that hour, however, Sophia ceased to caress the children in their father's presence; and Lord Aston would have feared that she had lost the attachment to them, which it had delighted him to behold, had not he learnt from their artless communications, that, in his absence,

she was as attentive to their wants and wishes as ever. Then why this comparitive coldness to them before him? Lord Aston's heart sometimes answered the questions in a manner satisfactory to his feelings, especially when he found Sophia's expressive eye, now, never responded to his fixed and impassioned glance; but her embarrassment of manner was soon accompanied by increasing coldness and reserve; and while his hopes were encouraged in one way, they were utterly damped in another; he had also the mortification of hearing Sophia frequently wish that her father's affairs would allow him to settle quietly in Norfolk, and summon her thither. Why this unkind haste to leave Laurel Grove? when Lord and Lady Erpingham seemed to delight in her society, and to love her as a daughter. To Sophia herself, there was a very sufficient reason for it, as she thought that Lord Aston's now evident attachment to her would not be approved by his own family; and she knew, on examining her own heart, that the longer she remained

exposed to his attention, the less able she should be to help returning the attachment. But we have too long lost sight of Julia Villeroy, who, when the hour at length arrived, so long and so painfully anticipated, found herself obliged to meet it unsupported by the hitherto soothing presence of her lover—as, only two days before her father breathed his last, Captain Fortescue was obliged to join his ship, and set sail to go against some pirates who infested the North Seas;—most reluctantly did he leave Julia, and the more so, because, during the parting hour, her reserve seemed to vanish entirely, before the strong evidences which he gave of his attachment, and his sorrow; and he was again convinced, that whatever was the cause which produced her coldness of manner, that her affections were still warmly his. Yes, in the presence of Lady Villeroy only, did Julia undergo the terrible pang of seeing those eyes for ever close, which had lately looked on her with all a father's fondness! and spite of the prospects which seemed to

await her, of wedded love and wedded happiness, the unhappy girl felt to her inmost soul that she was an orphan, and desolate, and afflicted. But, even in the first moments of bitter and tender anguish, Julia was taught by her habitual piety to remember that she had a father in heaven, and while she cast all her cares upon him, her mind acquired strength to meet and overcome her trials, and the burst of agony was met contented by the heartfelt and involuntary prayer. But even in the first moments of her tender and bitter agony, the widow of Sir George Villeroy, and the mother-in-law of Julia, remembered, that during the last months of the life of the deceased, the image of Julia's mother—that woman of whom alive and dead she had been incessantly jealous—seemed ever present to Sir George's mind, and that he had repeatedly declared, while gazing tenderly on Julia, that she lived before him again in her. It was, therefore, with vindictive aversion that Lady Villeroy beheld the innocent cause of the

mortification which she had experienced, and while she recollected that Sir George's last look—last kiss—had been Julia's, she drove her from her presence with ungovernable rage; and the terrified girl, when told that Lord Erpingham and Lady Helena were arrived, and desired to see her, flew for refuge to their arms, as if to stay where she was, was dangerous and impossible: but it was impossible for Julia to remain long under the dominion of her feelings, and no sooner had the earl and her sympathizing friend expressed their intention to take her instantly away, than she became calm, and assured them that however ill Lady Villeroy might behave, she was resolved not to insult the memory of her father, by letting it be suspected that his widow had driven her from the house before his unburied remains were removed to their last home.

"But if she insists on your going?"

"She will not do that, depend on it; on the contrary, she has desired me to remain with her some time, and it is only when

she gives way to these paroxysms of jealousy, that she cannot bear me in her sight."

"But why, dear girl, should you be subject to her temper, even for a moment?"

"Because she was my father's wife, and he gave her authority over me by making her his wife; and, therefore, Miss Brightwen always taught me that duty to my father required me to obey her, and bear with her infirmities."

"And as usual, my dear Julia," said the earl, "Miss Brightwen taught you what was right, therefore stay with Lady Villeroy as long as your own excellent head and heart counsel you to do so. Poor woman! I must own I feel for Lady Villeroy."

"I am sure, so do I, my dear Lord," replied Julia, "for it must have been very trying to hear my poor papa say that he loved me, because I was so like my angel-mother."

"No wonder she was jealous, I am

sure I should have been so, should not you Helena?"

"Indeed I should, and were Restormel to tell me he loved me, because he fancied me like his mother, I should certainly dismiss him; still I fear I am not amiable enough to pity your mara—, Lady Villeroy I mean, but I will try to do so if she will let you come to us in a few days, as you can't return with us, and Miss Brightwen will not be allowed to come to you."

"When do you go back to Laurel Grove?"

"To-morrow," said the earl, "but not till the will is opened, as you tell me that my poor friend ordered it to be read directly, and it may contain something which I ought to be made acquainted with immediately, but after that is over, for Helena's sake, I shall make a point of returning, as Lord and Lady Restormel are staying with us, but Helena would not let me come alone."

"How kind—to leave home for my sake at such a moment," cried Julia, burst-

ing into tears; "and how comforting it would be to me to be with such kind friends at this time, but duty commands me to stay, and to bear and forbear."

"A difficult task with some people."

"Yes, but when I reflect how terrible a pang jealousy is, and how great an object of jealousy I have been to poor Lady Villeroy, I do not feel the task so hard an one: —oh, she must hate me, I know she must!" Julia spoke with such excessive earnestness, and with a countenance of such a peculiarly painful expression, that Lady Helena looked at her with alarm and surprise. Could she—could Julia know the pangs of jealousy herself—could she be jealous of Fortescue? But she could not, dared not put this question to her. She ventured, however, to ask her, suddenly, if she had heard from Marcus before he sailed?

"Oh, yes," was her hurried reply, uttered with deep blushes, and an averted face.

"What a trial it was, Julia, for him to

leave you, and for you to be left at such a moment."

"It was, indeed, a trial to both, no doubt."

"No doubt!—you cannot doubt it."

"No, certainly not," Julia gravely, nay even solemnly, replied; and Lady Helena said within herself, then, surely, I was mistaken, and she is not jealous. "Besides," resumed Julia, "he may be gone into danger; oh, I must not think that way!" The conversation now took an interesting and affecting turn, as it relieved the full heart of Julia to converse on what had occurred during the last hours of her beloved father's existence, but they were interrupted by a note from Lady Villeroy, which was as follows:

"Lady Villeroy's compliments to Lord Erpingham and Lady Helena Fortescue; she need not say that her present situation makes it improper for her to receive visitors, who are not near relations, but Lady V. and Miss Villeroy will be glad to see Lord Erpingham and Lady Helena

Fortescue at a more proper and convenient season."

"Excellent!" cried Lady Helena; "fairly turned out, papa."

"I cannot deny it," replied the earl; "still, though not near relations, the friend of her husband; and the father-in-law and sister-in-law, in future, of Miss Villeroy, might, I think, have met with better treatment; however, I shall take the hint, and ring for the carriage."

Poor Julia was too mortified, too overwhelmed to speak; nor did she seem at all cheered when Lady Helena said, that she earnestly hoped and expected that Sir George had left the earl her guardian, and that he would have power to remove her immediately from the hateful thraldom she was then in.

When her noble friends took leave of her, the earl said that he should write a note to Sir George's solicitor, who was also his own, desiring him to let him know the contents of the will, as his own proceedings must depend on them.

They were no sooner gone than Lady Villeroy summoned the weeping Julia to her apartment, to inveigh against the indelicacy and indecorum of the earl and Lady Helena, for having intruded themselves on Julia, and having come to her house at so improper a time; but, no doubt, she said, the earl was impatient to know what was likely to be the amount of the fortune coming to his hair-brained son. To these invictives, Julia was too prudent to reply, and she took the first opportunity of retiring to her own apartment.

The dinner hour passed much to Julia's satisfaction, in gloomy silence on the part of Lady Villeroy, and Julia again retired; but she was not allowed, as she usually was, to refuse drinking tea, and to pass the rest of the evening in her own room. On the contrary, she received an express command to come down and make tea, as Lady Villeroy was too busy to do so herself.

"But for whom am I to make tea?" asked Julia.

The servant could not tell her, and Julia reluctantly obeyed the summons. There were, she saw, three tea-cups on the board, but no guest as yet appeared; however, her curiosity was soon gratified, for a tall, fine looking man entered the drawing-room, and bowing with an air of great respect to Julia, expressed in a most insinuating voice, and with a manner of uncommon gracefulness, his hope that he had not made Miss Villeroy wait tea for him.

"Certainly not, sir," replied Julia, coldly, and repulsively, though pleased in spite of herself with the stranger's appearance; "I did not expect you or any one;" and she wished to add, but dared not, as Lady Villeroy thought it improper to receive my friends, and— I wonder she receives you.

But the stranger as if he guessed what was passing in her mind, said—"It is an awkward thing to be forced to introduce oneself, Miss Villeroy; but as Lady Villeroy is not here to present me in form,

I beg leave to tell you in order to excuse my presumption in appearing before you, that my name is Aubrey, that I am the cousin and nearest relation of Lady Villeroy, and I am just returned from a long residence abroad, in consequence of being summoned by her." Julia only bowed in reply.—Mr. Aubrey's relationship to Lady Villeroy certainly justified that lady for receiving him so soon; but it was no reason for her being obliged to associate with him during the hours of such recent affliction. Therefore, though his countenance and manners were of the most prepossessing nature, Julia left Mr. Aubrey as soon as ever her task of making tea was over—but her doing so exposed her to the severest reproaches from Lady Villeroy, who followed her to her apartment and expressed her resentment of what she called her impertinence in having presumed to treat her nearest relation and herself with such disrespect as to leave him alone when she had desired her to stay and entertain him.

"At a moment like this, madam," replied Julia firmly, though gently, "I should have thought that I might be excused from seeing and entertaining a stranger, even though he was a relation of my own; especially as you did not think it proper to allow my dearest friends to remain with me long."

"You shall see and receive those whom I choose you to receive, and no one else Miss Villeroy, for I know, what you will know to-morrow, that I am your whole and sole guardian."

"You! madam?" exclaimed Julia, turning pale, "you!"

"Yes, I, I, therefore you had better prepare your stubborn heart to obey me as soon as possible, and I will leave you to make due preparation; but remember that you come down to supper." Scarcely could the surprised and agonised Julia controul her feelings till this tyrant in perspective had left her, but then she gave way to a burst of uncontroulable sorrow. Lady Villeroy her guardian! but surely it could not

be—her father's kindness to her and evident estrangement towards Lady Villeroy, were, she flattered herself, a guarantee to the contrary; and she now became as anxious as Lady Villeroy herself for the opening of the will: with a heavy but submissive heart she obeyed the summons to supper—to supper, a meal not usual in that house, and which was, she doubted not, given wholly in compliment to the new guest, and an abiding guest he was to be; for on seeing trunks in the hall she asked whose they were, and was told they were Mr. Aubrey's. At sight of the supper she was still more surprised, for it was abundant and elegant, but as Mr. Aubrey declared he had eaten no dinner, her surprise in a degree vanished. But she was astonished to think how great his power over Lady Villeroy must be, to have conquered her habitual parsimony, so as to have wrung from it such a repast as she now beheld. She was equally astonished to observe the kindness and deference, which Lady Villeroy's manner towards

Mr. Aubrey evinced, though in any other woman, such attention to such a man would not have surprised her, as she could not but own that he was facinating both to the eye and ear, and had the power to excite in any one all feelings but that of confidence. But why he did not inspire this feeling, she would have found it difficult to explain, except it was that his manner was too soft, his tone too insinuating, and as if they were softened, and harmonised more by art than nature. However, he was her mother-in-law's relation and guest, and no more to her; therefore, all that she had to do was to behave to him with civil respect. The next morning was one of anxious expectation to Julia and Lady Villeroy at least, for then the will was to be opened. It was opened and read! and to the disappointment of Lady Villeroy, but the joy Julia, there was a codicil found by which the latter was put in immediate possession of her fortune, and as she was so soon to be married, was left meanwhile under no guardianship but her own! By

the same codicil Lady Villeroy's expectations of wealth were more than equalled, though her hopes of having still power over Julia were frustrated, as Sir George, conscious, no doubt, that he no longer could bestow his affections on Lady Villeroy, wished to make her amends by giving her what she equally valued. He therefore added a considerable bequest in money to what she possessed under her marriage settlement, and the fee of half of it; still leaving his daughter heiress to a very large, and now unencumbered property. In the codicil he also left legacies to all the members of the family at Laurel Grove, and twenty guineas for a ring to Miss Brightwen.

"Well, then," said Lord Erpingham, when informed of the contents of the will, "you and I, Helena, have nothing to do but return immediately to Laurel Grove, and I trust that as Julia is her own mistress, we shall soon see her there." Lady Villeroy's expectations were similar to his own, and following Julia into her apart-

ment, she exclaimed—" So, Miss Villeroy, I see very clearly that you must have taken pains to misrepresent me to your dear father, or he would never have altered his intentions of leaving you to my care, and I doubt not but you will be off to Laurel Grove as soon as possible."

" You accuse me, madam, unjustly, in both instances," she replied; " I never spoke of you but with respect to my father, and I do not intend to leave you as long as my remaining with you can be to you either comfort or satisfaction."

" Comfort it cannot be—but satisfaction it will; not only because it will look well in the eyes of the world for us to remain together, but also, because as my Cousin Aubrey is going to remain with me to superintend my affairs, it would not be proper for a woman like me, who is as yet young enough to be admired and talked of, to live in the house with a man like Aubrey, without a female companion—so you must stay while he stays, to guard my reputation."

Could Julia have smiled at such a moment, she would have smiled now at hearing this speech; but she could not even reply to it: she, however, in general terms, expressed her readiness to remain with Lady Villeroy, and pleased at the compliance, Lady Villeroy actually imprinted a kiss on her forehead. Poor Julia would fain have followed the remains of her beloved father to the grave: but, as Lady Villeroy did not follow, she was not allowed to do so; and the day of the funeral was one to Julia of unmitigated suffering: some days after that event had taken place, Julia, who wrote constantly to Lady Helena and Miss Brightwen, received the following letter from the former:

"*Laurel Grove.*

"Did I not tell you, dearest girl, that I could never be merry and wise? did we not agree, that it is safer to be in a state of sorrow, than one of happiness? And now, having, like some writers, put my moral first, I shall proceed with my story. Oh! how delightfully did the first days of Lady

Restormel's visit here go off; she, delighting in talking over the hours of her illness and her danger; and when she had drawn from me some account of my attendance on her, how eloquently, how affectingly, and how flatteringly did she express her gratitude and affection! then, when Restormel stole a few hours from his parliamentary duties to come to us, all was enjoyment, and I, as it now appears, was in an unsafe state of blessedness. For, mark the sequel—my evil genius made her appearance at Laurel Grove, in the shape of papa's great niece, and my cousin the Honourable Norah Netherby, that strange, daring, eccentric being, with whom I almost constantly associated while I lived with my grandmother, and who, by means which I never could account for, acquired an irresistible and pernicious ascendency over me! I believe, that in understanding I am her equal, if not superior; and in information and acquirement, she is decidedly inferior to me; still, by dint either of fear or love,

she could always weigh down my better judgment, and carry her point with me: whatever it was, all these scrapes, which have made me so disagreeably talked of, she drew me into, and she was the cause of Lady Restormel's dislike of me. Such are her powers of ridicule and of mimicry, that she could always make me forego my resolution, however wise, and comply with her wishes, however foolish. However, as I am now two years older than when we met last, I had reason to hope that I was grown wiser; therefore, I did not absolutely faint, when I saw her drive up to the door by herself in a post-chaise, a few evenings ago, and knew that Lady Restormel, to whom she is a sort of buga-boo, was our guest! but I felt myself turn pale, and running to meet her in the hall, I exclaimed, I know in no very kind tone, 'Norah, what can bring you hither, and why are you come?' She replied, with a sarcastic look—'If you had said, Norah, why the deuce are you come, and the deuce take you, you would only, I see,

have done justice to the feelings of your heart at seeing me, Nelly. What—neither look, nor tone of welcome! However, no matter, welcome or not, here I must stay, for I have nowhere else to go, and my uncle will not turn me from his door—his poor, friendless, houseless, pennyless niece!' Here she brushed an involuntary tear from her eyes and which went to my heart; clasping my arms round her, I said, 'You are welcome! but, what has happened to you?' 'Pay my chaise first, and dismiss the man, and then I will tell you, for I have not a sous.' I ordered the butler to do so, and took her into the first room near us, and then I learnt her pitiable story, that her father had nearly spent the remnant of his fortune, and was intending to go from France to America, and take her with him, but that he had fallen in love, with a married woman, and had preferred taking her. He had, therefore, left a letter for Norah, with a small sum of money, desiring her to make the best of her way to England, to her uncle at

Laurel Grove: that her desolate state had excited great pity; that she had been invited to travel to England, from Caen, with an Irish family; that she had contrived to quarrel with the wife and daughter before they sailed; that she had, therefore, parted from them at Dover, and had come to us pennyless and unprotected, by coaches as she could, till the last stage, when she took a chaise, knowing we should pay for it: with us, therefore, it was very clear that she must remain; but what would Lady Restormel feel or say? and while I put this question involuntarily to myself, I could not help answering it thus —'and pray what does that signify to us?' is not my father to receive his own niece without consulting her; and is she to tyrannize over our family, because I am to marry her son!' As if Norah read what was passing in my mind, she now observed— combing her black crop with her fingers, adjusting the Belcher handkerchief which was tied round her throat, and with another handkerchief dusting her boots, as a man

would have done, in her usual masculine way—'Nelly, my dear, let me look at your mouth. Is it very sore? for I am told you wear the Restormel bit. Does it sit easily, sweet coz?' 'Nonsense!' replied I; but, consciously blushing, 'Lady Restormel is staying here—and, and I own that her son is my lover.' 'How! what is the empress herself here? Bravo! then I will have fine sport with her! I will pay off old scores with a vengeance!' While I listened with speechless consternation to this threat, papa entered the room, and in an instant, the strange girl, whom he loves for her resemblance to her mother, was hanging about his neck, and with tears, usually strangers to her eyes, was telling him her tale of sorrows. 'Enough,' cried he, 'my poor child! you have an uncle who will be a father to you; and Helena, I trust, will be a sister to the companion of her early youth?' 'Why did papa say this? did he fear that I had imbibed Lady Restormel's prejudice against my cousin?' I suppose he did, and indeed he was not much mistaken, for I had much rather

have seen a ghost than Norah. To me she was now like the Arminian to the poor youth in the tale, and the sight of her boded evil to me. Yet, was I not a free agent; and if I was just to myself, could she make me behave improperly? surely not; and I at length summoned up sufficient courage to go and break Norah's arrival to Lady Restormel. But I want words to describe the effect which the intelligence had on her. She absolutely changed colour, and opened her large eyes to their utmost dimensions, while she exclaimed, 'She here!' then, shrugging up her shoulders, she retired to her own rooms, without deigning to say one word more; and as she shut the door, it was with an angry violence, which grated harshly on my feelings, and roused my pride. When I returned in search of Norah, I found her at her toilet, and before I went to mine, I tried to tell her that I wished she would be as little eccentric and indecorous in her dress as possible, but I dared not; and I consoled myself for my weakness in not doing so, by the idea

that I ought not to feel or act upon such slavish fear of Lady Restormel. I am interrupted, and cannot finish my relation till to-morrow, my dear girl! How we all rejoice with you at the news just received of the safety and complete success of Marcus, in the expedition with which he was entrusted! and also in our expectations of his speedy return! I do not believe that you can stay long with Lady Villeroy. This Aubrey, whom she means, perhaps, should fall in love with her, will fall in love with you, and she will send you off at a moment's notice; therefore, as Miss Brightwen tells you in her letter, we advise you to choose papa for your guardian, then he will be authorized to take you away directly, as it is his will and pleasure you should come hither, *nolens volens*. Think of this! only think of that dear Sophia being gone! but her father wanted her; however, she will return soon: but, when she went, I felt that I had lost my guardian angel, and so it proved.

"Adieu! till to-morrow. H. F."

It was with great thankfulness that Julia felt her fears for Fortescue's life removed by a short but affectionate letter from himself; but her secret cause for uneasiness still remained, and she resolved to choose any guardian rather than Lord Erpingham. However, she was not as yet called upon to make choice of any, and while she mourned over the dangers and trials to which she saw that Lady Helena would now be hourly exposed—trials which might in their result entirely destroy her prospects of happiness, Julia could not help feeling that trials, however severe, which we do not bring upon ourselves by any imprudence of our own, are comparatively easy to endure.

The next day Lady Helena wrote again:

"Now, dear Julia, to resume my tale. Well, we were all assembled round the dinner table, but no Norah appeared, and the groom of the chamber was again sent to cause it to be announced to Miss Netherby that dinner waited for her; when, just as the fish was going to be taken off,

she made her appearance; but, oh, such an appearance! I looked, involuntarily, in terror, at Lady Restormel, when my mother said, 'Lady Restormel, Miss Netherby my lord's niece.' Lady Restormel coldly bowed; but Norah, what do you think she did?—why, she gave her a sort of nod, poking her hair up with her finger at the same time. It was a declaration of war; but luckily one glance at her was enough for the viscountess; she did not see the nod. You never saw Norah, therefore I will describe her: nature has given her such white and delicate feminine limbs, such a pretty little person that art cannot make her form masculine, let her try ever so to do it; but her manners and her hair, are those of a man, not a woman. Her eyes are black; her nose large and Roman; her mouth wide, but her lips are of that high scarlet which is often seen when the complexion is as her's is, of a sallow and colourless hue, and her teeth are fine. This day, however, as if to make her appearance as fierce as possible, she had put

on a profusion of high rouge, and her person, that is her back and shoulders, and her bosom were nearly without covering, while her petticoats displayed the whole of her fine feet and ankles; in short, she looked like an opera figurante who had forgotten her head-dress. I declare, Julia, I could not look at her; but not so, a silly young man, a sort of rich *parvenu*, a Mr. Benson, whom papa is bringing as much as he can into good society, to keep him out of bad. This youth, knowing she is the Hon. Miss Netherby, and papa's niece, was disposed to admire her before she appeared, and the first inviting glance of her dark eye, an eye that always seems seeking whom it may devour, fixed him her's, and he had a grin for all her observations, a loud laugh for all her jokes, and I saw that, if she pleased, the youth's thousands a-year would soon be her's. This *petit succès*, of which she was very conscious, emboldened her to engross the conversation, and made her complaisant enough to wear the shawl, which papa desired me to lend her,

lest she should catch cold, a hint which she was too politic not to take; and papa fancying that her style of dress was French, not her own, and pleased at her obedience, gave himself up to the charm her vivacity always has for him, and really forgot that she talked more than any young woman ought in the presence of her elders;—while Lady Restormel sat in proud if not sullen silence. Then her eating! she began by detaining the fish till she had filled her plate with that, and when the second course was going to be removed, she was eating still and alone; but for this she had the grace to apologize, by declaring that she had not eaten one good meal for days, as she had not money to buy one: while she said this, she had evidently tears in her eyes, and Lady Restormel saw it, in whose ear mamma was at that moment telling the story of Lord Netherby's shameful and cruel conduct. I instantly saw the change the tale and the tears produced in that noble being's feelings, that is, I saw pity struggle with, and, for a moment, overcome

disgust and aversion ; and with a look and tone which ought to have gone to Norah's heart, had not that heart been of stone, she courteously said, ' Do not hurry yourself, Miss Netherby, I have not done yet ; I am going to eat one of those puddings.' In reply, the strange unfeeling girl only said, ' Oh ! I never hurry myself ; I always take my time.' Then, soon after, she said, ' Lady Restormel, shall I have the honour to take wine with you!' and it was in so mannish and brassy a manner, that I saw my father was disgusted ; not so Benson, for he laughed with delight, and I was in terror lest he should clap her on the back and call her a funny fellow, if not, a jolly dog. Lady Restormel's aversion now returned in its full force ; and, not deigning to notice this masculine proposal, she entered into conversation with the gentleman next her. ' If you want wine, Norah, I will drink with you,' said papa, gravely ; ' it is not the custom, in this country, for ladies to challenge ladies to drink :'—but enough of this odious dinner. The next

day, as I expected, Lady Restormel said she had altered her mind, and would go and spend three or four days at the house of a friend in the neighbourhood, and return to us against her son came. In the meanwhile she studiously avoided being alone with me, because, no doubt, she dared not speak of Norah lest she should be betrayed into the utterance of something severe; her manner was, however, very kind; and when we parted, her kiss was more than usually affectionate; but she could not help saying, in a low voice, 'take care!' and as this was overheard by Norah, it did not escape a comment from her. 'How much that kiss and manner conveyed, Nelly! poor, unhappy child! it seemed to say, be of good cheer! at present I love you, and will continue to patronise you, and you shall have the great joy of being my daughter-in-law and slave; but, beware! and behave prettily, or it is all over with you!' then, with an oath, yes, Julia! with an oath, she added, that the finest and best husband in the world is

not worth the sacrifices of will and independence, which Lady and Lord Restormel would, she saw, exact and expect from the wretched slavė who entered their family. This conversation did me no good, and there was no Sophia near to counteract it! By-the-by, I ought to have told you that Aston left us the day Sophia did, therefore, there was no one to keep this imp in order. I must also tell you, that papa seeing Sophia's evident uncomfortableness and wish to leave us, began to search about for a cause, and having found one, he desired to see her alone. Sophia returned from the conference with tears in her eyes, and a deep flush on her cheek—but so handsome, and, I suspect, so happy! for she had taken it into her head that papa would disapprove Aston's attachment to her, and that, therefore, for his sake and her own, she ought to go away; he, suspecting this, thought it right to tell her that when decency allowed Aston to propose to her, it would, he assured her, be with his and Lady Erpingham's

entire approbation. I suspect that he said the same to Aston. Sophia will return to us in a few days, and oh! that you would but meet her here, for she almost pines after you, and surely no one has such claims on you as she has (my brother Marcus excepted). Again interrupted, I must close this, and write again to-morrow.

"H. F."

CHAP. XVIII.

LADY HELENA did write again as follows:—

"I hope to get through my disagreeable recital to-day Julia—and then I wish you to say something soothing in reply if you can; well, insensibly, Norah resumed her ascendancy over me, but though she resumed her usual sports, and went coursing with the gentlemen, and rabbit hunting, I did not accompany her on these occasions, not from a regard to decorum, but simply from humanity and a dislike to witness the cruel sport of depriving animals of life; but I resumed with her one old amusement of jumping over hedges and ditches with a pole, and also riding pony races with her in the park. And why not? unless convinced that such things were improper; I could only forbear from a servile fear of Lady Restormel, therefore, I

had my own approbation of what I did. But one morning, alas! after an early breakfast, as we were walking in part of the park, called the paddock, and where there was a leaping-bar, Norah challenged me to jump over it as we used to do in earlier days, and as I thought no one would see us, I consented, a love of jumping being, you know, one of my besetting sins; and I forgot the Reverend John Sumner, and my assurance to him:—accordingly we jumped over this bar, heightening it as our power grew stronger, till at last we both could clear it by a running leap—'Aye,' said Norah; 'but the difficulty is to do it by a standing leap—you cannot do that Nelly, but I can;' accordingly she prepared to do so, made the attempt and failed, and in her fall she certainly did not fall as decently as Cæsar at the foot of Pompey's statue. Her failure, and consequent personal exposure, ought, I own, to have deterred me; but emulation was stronger in me than a sense of propriety, and summoning all my force and agi-

lity, I leaped over the bar, and without touching it! at this moment I heard a shout from many voices as if of joy and congratulation, and looking up I saw for the first time that the roof of a barn near us, which some men were thatching, was covered with men watching the notable feats and exertions of two right honorable young ladies! and as the lookers on were, I concluded, some of my father's tenants, and men, they shouted from joy to see their young lady succeed where a stranger failed! Norah looked mortified, and I fear I looked triumphant, though shocked and ashamed of having been observed, even though victorious, and I vowed I would jump no more as we were overlooked; but my triumph was of short duration for scarcely had the shout ceased when standing up in her barouche, which stopped to let a cart pass at the entrance of the lower park gate, I beheld Lady Restormel! and she had witnessed the jump, and heard the shout. No doubt her look and mine were a scene for those who could en-

joy them, and Norah laughed aloud—while I, mortified and wounded to the quick, ran off full speed to the house, and never stopped till I reached my own room, and there I threw myself on the bed in an agony of tears. Lady Restormel's friends were forced to leave home that morning early, therefore she had returned some hours sooner than she had expected to set off, and she arrived just time enough to see not only vaulting by the Lady Helena Fortescue, but to witness the noisy sympathy of *le tiers etat* with my success; yes, she must suppose that my performance was consciously made in their presence. Horrible degradation! yet one from which the swelling pride of my heart forbade me to clear myself! let the consequences be what they might. I had not been long in this state of contending and feelings, when my mother tapped at my door, and said, 'Helena, do you know that Lady Restormel is arrived?' I replied in so faint and sorrowful a tone, that my mother instantly entered the room, and I relieved my own

full heart, but tortured her's, by throwing myself on her neck, and giving way to a paroxysm of tumultuous feeling. But seeing her alarm I controlled my emotions, and, soon as I could, told her the cause of them. 'And is this all, my love!' cried she, 'heaven be praised! and is this agony occasioned only by fear of Lady Restormel's disapprobation?' Here her voice faltered, and throwing herself on the bed she wept for some moments in silence, while I, attributing her tears to the terror mine had excited in her, reprobated very loudly my own want of self-command, as it had so painfully affected her; but gently drying her tears, she replied, 'No, no, it is not that which thus affects me, it is to feel how alive you are to the fear of displeasing Lady Restormel, and of offending her ideas of propriety, and that my disapprobation seems a matter of perfect indifference to you! My dear child! is Lady Restormel alone a judge of what is right, and is the disapproval of your father and myself a matter of indifference to you?' I was

thunderstruck! but, I could with perfect truth sooth and pacify her, by assuring her that it was not a true, but an exaggerated view of my offending, which I expected and feared from Lady Restormel; and that if she were as candid as my beloved mother, I should not fear her. This assurance healed her tender, maternal jealousy, and she left me to go and exculpate me from the worst part of the business, that of jumping before witnesses. This she insisted on being allowed to do—and I could not disobey; besides, in my heart I was not sorry, spite of my pride, to be so exculpated; she soon returned to conduct me to my dreaded judge. I saw by her eye that Lady Restormel had been shedding many tears, and I instantly concluded that she had wept over my weakness and fears of its results; and when she opened her arms to me, which she did as soon as she saw me, my tears of regret and compunction redoubled, and I was going to express my sorrow for my indiscretion when she stopped me, saying—'Enough!

I had rather not talk on the subject, you were, I find, unconscious you were overlooked, and the pastime itself, however absurd, is comparatively a trifle, and not worth animadversion: besides, you were tempted by your companion, you would not have jumped alone, Helena!' *Ne gagez pas!* cried I, smiling through my tears, and then I honestly told her of my feats in Norfolk, and of my promise then to do so no more. 'Really, my dear friend,' said the countess to my mother, 'our Helena is incorrigible, and a jump is to her the Cleopatra, for which, like Marc Antony, she would lose the world, and be content to lose it.' Yes, the world, but not your good opinion, said I. 'Well said, Hyperbole!' she replied, 'thou art a flatterer, Helena!' 'No, she is the most honest of human beings,' cried my mother eagerly, for she need not have told us this last tale of herself.' 'Certainly not, and being so ingenuous can never go very far from the path of rectitude.' We then talked of other things, but before I left

her, she said, 'Helena! would it not be better to say nothing of this silly business to Restormel when he comes?' No, indeed! replied I, I will have no concealments from him; he shall not be deceived, but see me with all my faults, to love or to leave as he chooses! 'I thought you would so reply,' she exclaimed, 'and you have not disappointed me.' We expect Restormel to-morrow, and I own to you I dread seeing a frown on his face. If he presumes to reprove me, and says he will not have a jumping wife! why then—but farewell my dearest Julia! you shall hear how he behaves. H. F.

The following was the postscript to the above letter:—

"Restormel came this evening unexpectedly, and no sooner were we alone than I told him with a faltering voice that I had a painful confession to make to him. 'Not that you find you do not love me, any thing but that I can bear,' was his reply. Indeed, cried I; then courage! and I told my tale, eagerly

watching his countenance as I did so, but he very soon turned his head away; however, I went on, and when I came to the shouting, and his mother's appearance, he interrupted me by giving way to a most immoderate burst of laughter, and it was some minutes before he could speak. 'Excellent,' cried he, at length—'oh! that I had been there, methinks I see my mother's looks and thine Helena! well, my sweet vaulter! all I wish is, that when next you vault, I may be there to see!' Dear! dear Restormel! never did I love him before as I did at that moment! Not one rebuke! one frown! he only said, when I expressed my regret for my folly—'I own I should not like to have my wife amuse herself in this way; but, really, considering the force of example, and the animal spirits of eighteen, I can readily excuse.' Excuse! cried I, not quite liking the word—'I mean,' resumed he, blushing, 'that I think it was natural for you to jump; and the being overlooked, unconsciously by you at least, was no fault of

your's! But my mother! methinks I see my mother! and would it were not then as now in "my mind's eye," Helena!' I can write no more, the post is going out. Oh! I am so pleased! so happy now!"

Lady Helena joined Lady Restormel in her own apartment soon after she sealed her letter, and in the same happy humour in which she wrote it. Lord Restormel had just left her apartment, and Lady Helena was not only eager to impart to the latter what her lover had said, but also to learn what had passed between him and his mother. Lady Helena expressed herself in most animated terms respecting Lord Restormel's kindness in judging what she called her offence; but Lady Restormel interrupted her by saying, "My dear Helena, how could Restormel do or feel otherwise? as he very properly said to me—'Lady Helena blamed herself so severely, and seemed so conscious of her faults, that I could not have the heart to reprove her, or make one displeasing observation. Had she set my opinion at defiance, and

defended what she had done, making light of such a circumstance, and seeming resolved to act in opposition both to decorum and my sense of propriety, then I certainly should have felt and spoken differently.'"

"And Lord Restormel said this!" said Lady Helena turning pale.

"He did, and I thought he spoke wisely—do not you think so?"

Very wisely, was her reply; and soon after she left the room. So then, thought she, it was to my submissive contrite spirit I owed his forbearance. Had I presumed to defend myself, and have a will of my own, he would have reproved me! he my lover! alas! what then will the husband do when I am in his power! and I had the folly to be so pleased with his manner of receiving my communications. At this unfortunate moment Lady Helena encountered Norah Netherby. This young lady was not only one of those persons who love fun and mischief for their own sakes, but, like Mansfeldt, she never forgave little affronts and

mortifications, and was always on the watch to revenge them in some way or other; not that she was generally envious, she was only so on particular points—for instance, she did not envy Lady Helena her excelling beauty, her tall and graceful person, and her various acquirement; with these she came into no competition, and was moreover sure from experience, that her little person, *piquante physiognomie* and amusing talents enabled her often to attract as much as her more highly-gifted cousin; but she valued herself upon her personal feats, and her excessive agility, and to be excelled by Lady Helena was an insupportable mortification, and not to be forgiven! while the shouts which overwhelmed Lady Helena with surprise and confusion, but which she, aware that they were beheld, had anticipated for herself, filled her with envy and bitter regret, and she longed to inflict some mortification on her cousin in return for what she had herself experienced. To Lady Restormel she had vowed unceasing dis-

like, for that lady's representations and arguments had, she knew, prevented a gentleman whose attentions she valued from making her his wife, as Lady Restormel knew that Norah Netherby was very ill-calculated to make a good mother to the infants a first wife had left him. Nor did she feel more good-will towards Lord Restormel himself, as he had been once so amused with her powers of mimickry and art *de raconter*, that he had staid a whole day longer at the house where he met her to enjoy her society, she had flattered herself that she had made such an impression on him as would not soon be effaced; but the woman whose chief recommendation, and whose prominent power is that of amusing, rarely interests, especially a man in the prime of youth; and when Lord Restormel ceased to see the arch playfulness of Miss Netherby's countenance, and to hear the queer croaking, but laughter-moving tone of her voice, he ceased to remember her, till he heard some new instance of her eccentricity, and that

of her more highly-gifted cousin, from his apprehensive mother; but Lord Restormel had excited hopes in Norah Netherby, which he had not fulfilled, and her vanity, though not her heart resented it; she was eager now, therefore, to take advantage of every opportunity to wound Lady Helena and Lord and Lady Restormel, where she knew them to be most vulnerable.

"Well, sweet Nelly! what ails thee," said she to Lady Helena, "there seems a cloud on thy brow? has thy lordly lover been scolding thee, poor little dear, and called thee jumping Joan?"

"No, indeed," replied Lady Helena unguardedly, "he saw no occasion to reprove me, as I was so self-condemned."

"And he presumed to say this to you? poor, humbled Nelly!"

"No, indeed, he did not say so to me—only to his mother."

"And that was presumptuous enough! If a lover dared so to have spoken of me! I would have made him repent his presumption: no wonder thy brow is over-

clouded, and this in all the first pride of thy youth and beauty Nelly! To use an elegant expression, thou hast brought thy hogs to a fine market ċoz!" These observations came only too home to the heart of Lady Helena, as her own pride had suggested to it the same feelings; but she was too wary to own this painful truth, and, in order to avoid a direct reply, she inveighed against the excessive vulgarity of expression and allusion in which Norah indulged herself, and before the dangerous subject could be renewed their conference was interrupted; but, its theme was not forgotten.—The next morning Miss Netherby went out with the gentlemen of the hunt in the neighbourhood, and by those staying in the house, having vainly endeavoured to persuade Lady Helena to accompany her. Her absence from the breakfast table certainly encreased Lady Helena's comfort, as, spite of herself, she did not feel at ease in Norah's presence, now that her lover and Lady Restormel were part of the family circle. A walk before break-

fast with Lord Restormel, and a morning spent with him and Lady Restormel in the latter's dressing-room, had removed all unpleasant feelings, at least for a while, from the mind of Lady Helena—a mind so happily constituted that it had a power of turning away from its disquiets, spite of its power to create disquiet, for itself. But Lady Helena saw that both her lover and his mother felt towards her confidence as well as love, and they inspired in her what they themselves experienced. At dinner she had to encounter Norah Netherby, but, however, Miss Brightwen was now returned again, and Lady Helena felt, therefore, as if her good genius were come to counteract her evil one. At table Miss Brightwen was seated opposite Miss Netherby, but after the first introduction had taken place, Norah was too much taken up in mustering the mischievious jokes which she meditated, to observe Sophia.

"So, Nelly," she begun, "you would not hunt with us to day, we had fine sport!

I was in at the death! I wish you had been there, it would have reminded you of former times, and the days of ancient granny's."

"Reminded me of former times!"

"Yes, to be sure, when you were a Nimrod!" Here Lady Restormel and her son exchanged looks.

"When was I a Nimrod?" cried Lady Helena, indignantly, "when did I ever hunt, Miss Netherby?"

"When? oh fie Nelly! to ask that question, but I see you wish me to be mum now, with a significant nod of her head, and a significant look at Lord and Lady Restormel, and I do not wish to tell tales."

"There are no tales to tell, Miss Netherby," replied Lady Helena, "I never hunted in my life!"

"She says true, I am sure my daughter never hunted," said Lord Erpingham, "nor should my niece if I had any power over her."

"How! do you say so too, Uncle Erp!

this I did not expect, and pray how can you assert this? you did not live with us at granny's?"

"No, but notwithstanding, I trust that Helena did not do there what I should have disapproved her doing here."

"Oh! you trust she did not, but if Helena took care you should not know it, you could not disapprove, you know; could you forbid, if she did not ask your leave?"

"What, I suppose Nelly never went shooting either?"

"Never, never!" exclaimed Lady Helena; "you could, you never could prevail on me to accompany you. I always hated all field-sports for women, as cruel and unbecoming."

"Always," she replied, with a meaning emphasis, and a sarcastic sneer, "always!" During these questions and replies, various changes of colour and emotions her quick eye had discovered on Lord Restormel's expressive face, and in the speaking countenance of his mother; and she was stimulated to go on, but, at this

moment, she felt that an eye as observant and penetrating as her own, was upon her, and spite of herself, she shrunk from the searching, severe, yet calm and quiet fixed look of Sophia Brightwen. However, she persevered, and said, " what, then, Nelly, you mean to deny do you,"

" Deny ! I mean to deny, as if I could deny a truth, however degrading to myself ?"

" You are angry Nelly ; no proof that of innocence, but let me go on. What ! do you not remember going out once, in January, and walking up to your knees in long grass ; but, to the surprise of all, bagging more than any of us, till they called you in the field, Helena Hitall, and declared, that if you took equally good aim at men with your eye, it would be dangerous to be in your company."

" Miss Netherby," cried Lord Erpingham, indignantly, " I insist upon your ceasing thus to calumniate your cousin."

" Nay, my dear lord !" said the countess, " Norah is only joking."

"Not I, indeed, Lady Erpingham. I mean what I say; I always am true, whatever else I am. I never hide my faults, present or past; and the man who marries me will, at least, know what he marries!"

"Admirable!" muttered young Benson, who seemed to hang enamoured on her looks and words.

Lady Helena was now too shocked, too much overpowered by this mischievous insinuation, that she was telling falsehoods, for fear of displeasing those whom it was her wish to conciliate, that she could no longer defend herself; and her father, also, was at first confounded by this implied charge, especially as he saw the effect it had on his noble guests; but, before he could recollect himself sufficiently to speak, the attention of every one was arrested by a sweet-toned, but rather loud laugh, from the usually silent and unobtrusive Miss Brightwen, who, while she laughed, fixed her eyes on Norah, with a meaning so satirical and contemptuous,

that the bold, brassy girl, was at once nettled, and awed by it.

"Are you laughing at me, madam!" said she, in a faltering voice.

"To be sure, I am!" was the reply, "or rather at your ludicrous description of my friend's astonishing feats in the field. I only wonder you did not say she was called Nelly Knock'em-down, Helena Hit-all is too elegant, and the other would have been more in your style; and I am sure the one would have been as true, and as like Lady Helena, as the other."

"Do yo mean to say that I lie, madam?"

"Why, lie is a vulgar word; I mean to say, that you are now romancing; your motives for so doing are best known to yourself; you may do so merely to entertain the company, but if you mean to be believed, you should not have gone to such improbable lengths in your assertions."

"Improbable! I appeal to you, Benson; have not you heard Nelly called

Helena Hit-all, on account of her killing such numbers in a *battu* once ?"

"Certainly, certainly; it was a notorious fact."

"There! you may doubt my word, but can you doubt his ?"

"Equally," replied Sophia, indignantly, and with a look of contempt. "There is not the word of any being living I would take in preference to that of Lady Helena Fortescue, who, so far from ever seeking to hide her errors, is only too apt to publish them unnecessarily; and I believe that there are those present who can corroborate the truth of what I say."

"There are, indeed!" said Lady Restormel, eagerly; "and such is the good effect of habits of ingenuousness, that suspicion of the contrary habit can never long attach to such a character, however ingeniously it has been fastened on it. Therefore, Miss Netherby, spite of your assertion, and that of your bribed witness, bribed, I see, by your smiles and your glances, I believe Lady Helena never either hunted

or shot; not only because she is neither cruel, nor unfeminine in her habits, but, simply because she positively asserts that she never did either."

"Oh! but I own I have shot at a mark," cried Lady Helena, struggling with the tears which the kind interference of Sophia had forced from her eyes.

"There!" cried Sophia, triumphantly, "now that confession is so like Lady Helena; and you, Baroness Munchausen, must withdraw your charge."

"It cannot be admitted; Miss Brightwen, dear respected friend! I thank you," said the Earl, "and you too Lady Restormel. Helena's cause was, I saw, in such good hands, that I did not think it necessary to interfere before; but now, I wish to ask Mr. Benson, why he asserted what he did, and made what he must know was a false assertion."

"Oh! my lord, because I did not like to spoil a good story. I thought Miss Netherby was only joking."

"I am satisfied; but what says Miss Netherby herself?"

" The contrary of the proverb; she says, Lord Erp, namely, not ' give a dog an ill name, and hang him'—but ' give a dog a good name, and save him.' I leave you to make the application."

" You are still joking, I presume, Norah," replied the Earl sternly, seizing her arm and grasping it violently as he spoke.

Norah was now alarmed, and readily exclaimed, " Oh dear, yes, to be sure! but your gripe is no joke."

He then released her, and dropping him a curtsy, she ran out of the room. Not long after Mr. Benson made an excuse for leaving it also. As there were no other company at dinner that day than Benson, Lord Erpingham was at liberty to speak as he felt concerning his eccentric niece, and he could not help saying, " that he was sometimes forced to remember her houseless, fatherless condition, to prevent his commanding her from his presence and his house."

" But, my dear lord, remember," said

the countess, " that poor Norah assured you, in what she asserted to-day, she was only in joke; did she not, Lady Restormel?"

" Miss Netherby has the honour of being Lord Erpingham's niece," replied that lady, her fine face suffused with crimson, " therefore, I beg leave to decline making a single observation on her conduct."

" I am glad, my lord!" said Lord Restormel, with eyes sparkling with indignation, " that you asked an explanation of that grinning puppy; if not I should, and not, perhaps, as mildly as you did. If he does not take care, Miss Netherby may get him into some difficulties which he will not be able to get safely out of."

" I believe, Restormel, she will get him into the worst of all difficulties for a man to get out; for, I suspect, she will get him into the matrimonial difficulty, and I can have no objection if she has not."

The ladies now left the table; and as Lady Restormel took Sophia's arm, the

latter said, in a low voice, " That young lady is a very dangerous person, does not your ladyship think so ?"

" Oh, most dangerous ! and I cannot help remembering the saying, ' One cannot touch pitch without being defiled', when I consider how much Lady Helena has lived with her."

" No wonder; but you should also recollect, dear madam, that no stain adheres long to a pure and fine skin; and the defilement, if there were any in this case, must have been removed from our dear friend, as soon as she ceased to associate with Miss Netherby."

" I wish for all our sakes, to believe you right; but, believe me, that I saw with pain how much Restormel writhed under the conversation at table : and, I know him so well, that I am sure he will now, that all obstacles to his attachment are removed, and that he considers this dear girl as his own, be far more tenacious than I could be on points that compromise in any way her dignity or conduct : jealous, also, he will be

of any influence over her, which can infringe on her exclusive regard for his opinions and even prejudices. She must, if she values and wishes to retain his love, be wary and circumspect."

"She is too ingenious to be the first," said Sophia, 'and too rash to be the second, I doubt, in any great degree; and I shall never feel her happiness safe while this dangerous girl remains here."

Norah, meanwhile, was ruminating in the park on what had passed, and having convinced herself that she had gone too far, and had also failed of her object, that of infusing suspicions of Lady Helena's integrity, as well as of her violation of what discreet persons call propriety, into the minds of Lord and Lady Restormel, she resolved to try and convince Lady Helena and her uncle and aunt that she was so obviously joking all the time she was speaking, that she was quite surprised at the gravity with which she was heard, and the angry violence with which she was contradicted; for she saw by her uncle's

manner, that on some subjects he was not disposed to bear raillery, and that he might send her away even before the conquest she was meditating was secured. Accordingly, after she had kept her appointment with Benson, and walked round the flower-garden with him, she sought her justly-offended cousin, and had no difficulty in appeasing her wrath, or making her believe she was only in sport, and was led on to shew the utmost of her talents as an actress, by the unexpected conviction which flashed in her mind, that her fiction appeared reality. Lady Helena's generous nature always made her hate to think ill of any one, more especially of the companion of her childhood, she therefore readily forgave and believed her, and induced Lady Restormel to do the same, but not Miss Brightwen, as she came to an examination of Norah Netherby's looks, conduct, and manner, with an unprejudiced as well as clear observation; she had not to distrust the probable justice of her own convictions as the others had, but was

justified in thinking her convictions true and unbiassed; she therefore still believed that what she said was uttered with a malicious intention, and prompted by bad motives, and she resolved never to let her vigilance in watching this dangerous girl, cease for a moment; but she was not suffered to remain long where she was; her father, ever restless, and ever in search of novelty to interest and occupy his mind, came unexpectedly to take her with him into Gloucestershire, to look at an estate which he wished to purchase there, and she felt it her duty to accompany him.

"Nelly," said Norah to her cousin when Sophia went away, "though I am glad she is gone, for her eye acts as a fetter on me, I cannot hate Miss Brightwen as I hate the Empress of Green Hills, and shall I tell you why?"

"Yes."

"Why the reason is, I believe, because I see that she is above being governed in her opinions of persons by what this person says and the other person asserts. She

judges for herself, and I see those searching eyes are bent only on discovering truth; and if while looking at and listening to me, she could find aught to commend, I should have the full benefit of the discovery, and she would defend me and give me my due, even in despite of her imperial majesty, aye, and her stern son too; am I not right?"

"Yes; and I never heard you utter any thing wiser in my life; but why do you hate Lady Restormel; she does not look at you so stedfastly and severely as Sophia does?"

"No, she scarcely deigns to look at me at all; besides, if she did, I know she would not look to see what was really in me, but what she fancies in me; her mind and her heart are steeled against me, and nothing would ever induce her to open them to me; but come, let us go into the billiard-room, you promised to play with me when the Brightwens' were gone."

It so happened that the billiard-room

joined the library, whither Lady Restormel had gone to search for a book, and, as the library fire was out, she had seated herself by that in the billiard-room, and was earnestly engaged in reading when Lady Helena and Norah entered; they could not see her, as a large folding-screen stood between her and the table; but she was just going to announce her presence, when she was kept back and confounded by hearing Norah exclaim, "I tell you, I do hate the empress of Green Hills, and always will hate her;" and before Lady Helena could reply, Norah gave a striking representation of Lady Restormel's mode of talking, voce, manner, and action; as a piece of mimickry it was perfect, but the honourable mind of Lady Helena forbade her to enjoy it; on the contrary, having vainly tried to stop her from proceeding, she resolutely held her ears, and when her mischievous companion had ceased, she told her, if she ever again presumed to ridicule and mimic in her presence, a being whom she so loved and

venerated, she would never rest till she had prevailed on her father to send her from the house, as one incapable of regarding the common claims and decencies of social life.

"But hear me, Nelly," cried the unabashed offender, "is it not like her?"

"Not the least, not at all; a faun might as well try to look like the Apollo, as you like her; not one look, one word like—let me pass—I will leave you!"

"No—there, I have locked the door and put the key in my pocket!"

"Give it me directly, or——"

"No; you shall hear some more; now hear how she reads Milton."

"I will not;—come, Norah, give me the key, or you know I am stronger than you, and I can take it by force."

But Norah resisted, and began to mimic Lady Restormel again, when that lady thought it high time to come forward; but, wishing to seem unconcerned, she chose to give her appearance an air of pleasantry; she, therefore, mounted a footstool, and

looking over the top of the screen, she exclaimed—

"Well done, Miss Netherby! it is a pity such talents as your's should be confined to private life; what think you of rivalling Mathews, and having a *public at home* of your own!"

Even Norah was abashed at this unexpected apparition, while Lady Helena was pale and trembling with consternation; but, recovering herself a little, the dauntless girl pretended to struggle with ungovernable laughter, and unlocking the door, was going to leave the room, as if on purpose to hide it, when Lady Restormel seized her arm and desired her to stop, for she wished to thank her for the obligation she had conferred on her.

"I am sure you are quite welcome," replied Norah, trying to look bold, while Lady Helena faltered out—

"Obligations! did you say?"

"Yes, dearest Helena, obligations; for, but for her degrading exhibition of me, I should not have had the heartfelt joy of

hearing myself defended by you, and knowing how dear I am to you; is not this an obligation?—I, therefore, humbly thank you, Miss Netherby, and believe me one too who has not gone through the world with closed eyes, that there is not a man or woman whose good opinion is worth having, that would not cheerfully consent to be ridiculed, and even mimicked by Norah Netherby if they were sure of being defended, loved, and respected by Helena Fortescue! You may go now, madam, she added, in her proudest manner."

"I do go, madam," she replied, imitating the tone exactly.

"Excellent ape!" said Lady Restormel as she did so. "Come come! be just Nelly! the likeness is perfect!" And Lady Restormel mimicked Norah as well; but added, "this was beneath me—was it not Helena?"

"I think it was," she replied, "yet not so when I consider that you thus mortified Norah by shewing her that you have as great a power of mimickry as herself, but

that you are above using the talent, on which she values herself."

Norah was mortified; she felt the power of Lady Restormel was equal to her own, and in spite of all her assured bravery, she was conscious that she retired wounded from the field—while Lady Helena was more endeared to the heart of Lady Restormel, and their happiness in each other increased; dear, indeed, to the heart of Lady Helena were the moments that succeeded, and when Lord Restormel left Laurel Grove the next morning, the renewed assurance which he felt of his mother's confiding tenderness towards the woman of his love, filled his whole soul with happiness and thankfulness. Norah again saw that she had lost ground with her cousin, which it was for her interest to keep, she therefore humbled herself before her, intreated pardon of her for the liberty she had taken with her and Lady Restormel, and was again forgiven; but unfortunately Lady Helena's generous feelings were apt to run away with her, and having

cordially forgiven Norah all her offences, she could not rest till she had proved her forgiveness beyond doubt, by an entire renewal of her wonted familiarity; and Norah was never so sure of carrying a point with her rash, but noble minded cousin, as after a recent reconciliation; a few days after this last disagreement, a review of the regiment in which Mr. Benson was a cornet, was to take place in the neighbourhood, and as the colonel was to give a breakfast after it, to which the family at Laurel Grove as well as others in the neighbourhood were invited, it was decided that they should attend the review. But, before the day arrived, Lord Erpingham was summoned to London by Lord Aston on business, and took one carriage away with him, and the riding horses were either lame or in medicine when the morning of the review came. Suffice, to avoid unnecessary details, that Lady Erpingham, from these and other circumstances, saw herself obliged to give up her kind intention of taking three young ladies to the

review and the breakfast, who were, she knew, invited, but had been forced to decline going, because they had no conveyance thither—and they had been brought up and accustomed to every luxury in life, but had suddenly been forced to relinquish all by the ruin of their father and his subsequent death. All the neighbourhood pitied them, and some beheld them with respect, others saw with contrary feelings the endeavours they made to conceal their poverty and to hold their heads as proudly as before; but Lady Erpingham and Lady Helena did more, they on every possible occasion offered them the use of their carriage, and in a manner as if they felt themselves obliged by their acceptance of it: greatly, therefore, did Lady Erpingham regret that she could at most offer only one seat in her carriage to the Miss Nanbys, when her difficulty was completely, though disagreeably removed. Norah had been for two days trying to prevail on Lady Helena to accompany her to the review on an ass, as they had

no riding horses, and as they had lately procured capital asses, on which they had amused themselves with riding races. It so happened that Norah had just declared her resolution to go herself on ass-back, and had even with tears lamented that her cousin now would never do any thing to oblige her, when Lady Erpingham entered the room, loudly lamenting her inability to take the Miss Nanbys to the review and breakfast, even though Lady Restormel was willing to give up her seat, and stay at home. Lady Helena joined in her lamentation; and no sooner was she gone again, than she told Norah she repented her refusal, and would accompany her to the field in the manner she wished; accordingly she told the countess that evening, when she retired for the night, that she and Norah had provided their own mode of conveyance, and that she had written a note to the Miss Nanbys to say that the barouche should call for them the next morning.

"But what conveyance have you procured Helena?" said her mother.

"Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest Ma, till you applaud the deed!" was the evasive reply, and no other would Lady Helena give. They were to be on the review ground by ten, but before Lady Restormel, who had had a bad night, had left her apartment, Lady Helena and Norah were mounted on their asses, which Norah had, out of compliment to Benson, ornamented with ribbands and saddle cloths of blue and red, the colour of his regimentals. Indeed he himself had been at the expense of these decorations. This folly was committed unknown to Lady Helena, but she did not think it necessary to desire the colours to be removed: she also thought that it would be more decorous for her also to appear on an ass, decorated with Benson's colours, than for Norah so to appear alone. Lady Erpingham saw them set off, but, though she did not approve, she had not the heart to object,

yet she was so sure that Lady Restormel would be displeased at such an eccentric excursion, that it was a long time before she ventured to name it to her.

"This comes of association with that bold girl," cried Lady Restormel angrily and hastily. Lady Helena would never have thought of doing such a thing herself—to make themselves the gaping stock of the vulgar crowd!"

"Well, well, dear friend, I hope the crowd will be too much engaged in looking at other things to notice them—and really I do not think poor Norah a bold girl." The carriages came round, and Sophia, who was just returned, went with Lady Restormel and one of the Miss Nanbys in her's, and the two others with Lady Erpingham.

"There is one comfort however," whispered Lady Restormel to Sophia, "Lord Erpingham and Lord Aston intend to meet us at the review, and then the asses will be sent home no doubt." When they reached the ground, as the weather was

still cold, Lady Restormel chose to remain in her carriage, while her young companions mounted the barouche seat. Lady Erpingham, with her friends, were conducted by a nobleman whom they knew to the side of the reviewing general.

"But where are your young lady and my niece," asked the former, of her servants?

"They are there, amongst that line of horsemen, on their asses, my lady."

"I see them now, but go and desire them to dismount and join me or Lady Restormel." The message was delivered, but not obeyed. Lady Helena herself would have dismounted immediately, but Norah would not hear of it; and I must own that as my heroine is by no means a perfect being, she was influenced to this disobedience, not only by Norah's persuasions, but her own weakness. Benson's own servant attended Norah and Lady Helena, as well as Lord Erpingham's, and this man had contrived on the road, to compliment Lady Helena, without offending her, on her admirable

management of so stubborn an animal, and he declared his conviction, that Jack would stand fire as well as any horse with such a rider; besides, he insinuated to Norah that his master would be so proud, and so pleased to see two such ladies amongst the spectators, shewing off the saddle cloths and ribbands, which matched his uniform. They, therefore, instantly rode up to the best spot for seeing and being seen, regardless of fear, and perhaps not sorry to be conspicuous. Lady Helena indeed might be chiefly influenced by high animal spirits, which often incapacitated her from sober reflection; besides, she wished to shew she was not in the thraldom in which Norah always declared that she was held by fear of Lady Restormel, and, at all events, this morning she was resolved to prove to her she had still a will of her own, and was resolved to act on it. But offending Lady Restormel was one thing, and disobeying her mother another: and she would have meekly followed the servant had not Norah entreated her to stop, and

muttered something about servile fear—no freedom of will—no energy of character; all of which Lady Helena only too well understood, and to the influence of which she now weakly yielded.

"Tell Lady Erp," said Norah, "that we are so well placed here, we cannot possibly stir; and that Jack and Bob are very tractable and pretty behaved."

This message, however, did not satisfy the anxious mother, and she wrote a pencil note to Lady Restormel, to beg her to invite Lady Helena to come to her.

Lady Restormel, though not as much alarmed, was more annoyed at Lady Helena's refusal than her mother was, and did as she was desired to do, but the messenger could not get near her, for the review was begun, and horsemen were gathering before him in close ranks; amongst whom he now saw Lord Aston, who had driven home, and had come on horseback to the field: in another moment he heard piercing shrieks, and saw Lord Aston spur his horse to get to the foremost

rank. The shrieks were from Lady Erpingham; and the action of Lord Aston was a desperate effort to save his sister from destruction; for the ass, though hitherto governable, on the horses coming forward full gallop in a charge, sprung forward as if to meet them; and the whole troop would have gone over him and Lady Helena, who could controul and turn him aside no longer, had not Lord Aston forced his way to the front, thrown himself off his horse, and snatched Lady Helena off the animal just as the danger seemed inevitable. He then sunk down on the ground, and Lady Helena, nearly fainting, lay beside him! The poor animal escaped with little or no hurt; but Lord Aston, in the jirk of throwing himself off, had dislocated his left shoulder, and was scarcely able (oppressed both with pain, and recent terror), to desire to be taken to Laurel Grove immediately—having said this, he fainted: and when Sophia made her way, even before the terrified mother, to the scene of alarm, the first object she saw

was Lord Aston apparently dead. On all occasions of alarm hitherto, Sophia had been distinguished by presence of mind, and power of salutary exertion—but now she stood stony and motionless, with her eyes wildly fixed on the death-like figure before her, and unable to ask whether he really breathed or not. At this moment his senses returned, his eyes unclosed, and they met those of Sophia, fixed in unutterable woe upon him; but, now bursting into uncontrollable tears of joy, as she saw him recover unto life, though into the consciousness of bodily agony at the same moment—but that he disregarded; Sophia's look had betrayed to him the secret of her heart, and while he grasped her offered hand, he murmured—" I am too happy in mind to regard my bodily pain; I saved Helena,"—and his eyes only spoke the rest: and when Lady Erpingham, Sophia, and the sister and the brother were seated in the barouche, and on their way to Laurel Grove, Lady Helena was the only one whose gratitude for the mercy vouchsafed,

was over-clouded; but she was bowed to the earth by the consciousness of her own obstinate disobedience; and though full of pleasurable feelings, for having her life saved, through the agency of her beloved brother, she was full of remorse for having endangered both his and hers by her own headstrong folly. The shoulder was soon replaced, but Lord Aston was desired to go to his bed, and keep quiet, and when he had seen Sophia, and once more received from her an answering look to that with which he beheld her, he was contented to retire and allow the depressed and penitent Helena to read him to sleep. Norah, who had herself been unseated, and who had reluctantly accepted a place on Lady Restormel's carriage, when she was forced in decency to follow her aunt and cousins from the ground, now flattered herself, and so did the Miss Nanbys, that all the party who liked it would return to the breakfast; but Lady Restormel had been too much alarmed and agitated to be their chaperon,

and they had no other. Accordingly, the carriages were dismissed; but Norah set off again, privately, on her ass, accompanied by Benson's servant, who carried his master's portmanteau before him; and it was hours before any one enquired what was become of her.

When Lady Helena left her brother's room, she repaired to that of her mother, who was forced to lie down after the excessive fright which she had received. There she found Sophia, who, as soon as she saw her, begged to know how she could ever think of going in such a style to the review.

"I will tell you why," she replied, "as I always wish to exculpate myself in your eyes as much as I can, and in going as I did, I am not much to blame. My fault was, not dismounting in obedience to my mother's will and common sense. I firmly refused to go on an ass, till I found that if Norah and I went in the carriage, the poor Nanbys would be disappointed; I therefore sacrificed regard of appearances to

benevolence, and had I stopt there, all would have been well."

" You were governed by a shewy, plausible motive ; but, I suspect, your first duty was to consider a more every-day duty than that of benevolence, to the poor Nanbys, namely, consideration for your parents, and your lover's feelings."

" My parents' feelings, if you please, Miss Brightwen ; but," she haughtily replied, " I will not be a slave to a lover."

" No ! poor Lord Restormel, how glad I am he did not see your danger ! how glad I am he did not see you, as I saw your brother ! It would have been to him, agony, madness !"

" Do you think so ?" said Lady Helena, softened and affected.

" I know so ; I know his noble heart dotes on you ; and, surely, even the prejudices of such a man are to be considered !"

" Sophia !" said Lady Helena, bursting into tears, " my narrow escape from death, has humbled me to the dust, spite of my late haughty seeming, and I feel that I am

not worthy the love of such a man as Restormel. I not only am not capable of always acting up to what he thinks right, but I do not always see the harm of what he disapproves, therefore there is no hope for me of permanent amendment."

Sophia shook her head mournfully, and replied, "You know yourself best; I can only pray for you, and urge you to pray for yourself."

She then returned to the drawing-room, where she had left Lady Restormel and the Miss Nanbys, the former of whom, though more fit for bed than to entertain company, made a point of staying with these ladies in the absence of the rest, lest in their fallen fortunes, they should fancy themselves slighted. But had she known their nature and temper, she would not have been so kindly regardful of their feelings. Never benevolent, but always, even in prosperity, given to petty detraction; disappointment and a narrow income had not improved their characters, and they were become less indulgent in their strictures than ever.

The youngest of them had once danced with Lord Restormel, and had fancied that his only common attentions had been particular ones; she, therefore, heard with displeasure that he was engaged to Lady Helena Fortescue, and even then did not entirely believe it: she, however, readily believed the common assertion, that Lady Restormel disapproved the marriage, on account of the eccentricity of Lady Helena. She, therefore, weakly imagined that she should gain that lady's good opinion, by blaming Lady Helena's conduct of that day; and was in the midst of sundry flings against uncommon people, eccentric geniuses, and the wisdom of the old proverb, "that common sense was the best of all sense," and that if Lady Helena had been like other people, Lord Aston's arm would not have been put out, and other people would not have been disappointed, when Sophia entered the room; and in all these remarks her sisters cordially joined, especially commending this last.

"It really is a pity that with such

fine qualities Lady Helena should so expose herself, and do such out of the way things; but, indeed, as I say, she has no regard for the feelings of others; why go to the review on an ass at all? How eccentric and uncommon!"

"Uncommon, indeed!" cried Sophia, her dark eye beaming with resentment, and her pale cheek became crimson with emotion; "uncommon, indeed, for her motive was purely a benevolent one; Lady Helena Fortescue accused of having no regard for the feelings and wishes of others, and this by you, ladies!"

"And why not by us, Miss, I really forget your name."

"Indeed, my dear friend," said Lady Restormel, smiling, and wondering at a violence so unusual in Sophia; "hitherto I never saw you so moved before." She then explained, and declared that the eccentricity of that day, for which they were so severely blaming Lady Helena, arose entirely from the benevolent wish of giving them pleasure.

The cheeks of the three sisters turned pale with vexation, instead of glowing with generous and grateful feelings, when they heard this; and Miss Bridget Nanby, observed, that she was really glad Lady Helena Fortescue had so good an excuse for her oddity; for her part she was not fond of owing obligations.

"No, indeed, nor we either," said her sisters, both at once.

"And," resumed Miss Bridget, "had we known that Lady Helena was exposing herself for our sake, we would not have accepted the offer on any account."

"As to the exposure of her life, by remaining on the ass, that, I conclude, was to please herself, not us."

"Certainly; but it was her wish to oblige you which led her into the temptation."

"Well, really, from any one but Lady Helena, this would look so like an excuse trumped up," resumed Miss Bridget.

"Yes, so it would," said Lady Restormel, "but not from Lady Helena For-

tescue—to her lips falsehood is a stranger. Good morning, ladies." She then, with all the haughty contempt in her manner, which she so well knew how to assume, left the room, leaning on the arm of Sophia.

Not long after a servant came in to say that Lady Restormel's carriage waited the orders of the Miss Nanbys if they wished to return home, as Lady Erpingham and Lady Helena were too unwell to enjoy their company.

The mortified girls, conscious that they had given their tongue too great a license, and sure that if they ever came to Laurel Grove again, it must be owing to the generous silence of Lady Restormel and Sophia, ordered the carriage round immediately and drove home.

Poor Lady Helena had just dicovered, by the violent pain she felt, and her inability to raise it to her head, that she had strained her left arm, by her resistance, as she supposed, to the headstrong animal which she rode, and her endeavours to rein him in when he plunged forward on the approach

of the troops, else she was too kind and courteous not to have made an effort, however painful, to entertain the Nanbys, and make them some amends for the loss of the splendid breakfast. Lady Restormel and Sophia, therefore, were almost glad of this additional reason for obtaining leave to send these ungrateful and back-biting girls away, and found it rather difficult to keep to themselves their conviction how little they deserved the kindness of Lady Helena.

"Well, Miss Brightwen," said Lady Restormel, when she was left alone with Sophia, "I suspect that you are disappointed at my not extolling Lady Helena's motives for going to the review on an ass, especially as you know, and I know, that but for the ill results of her folly she would never have excused it by telling her benevolent reasons."

"I own," said Sophia, "that I did expect you would, though you must in justice blame her refusing to quit the ass when the purpose was answered."

"My dear friend, I admire the motives, and the secret unostentatious kindness of Lady Helena as much as you do; but alas! it is not on a power of performing out of the way actions of kindness in the woman he marries that a husband's peace depends, but on a capability of performing common unobtrusive actions, and making little sacrifices, especially of the will, that the happiness of married life rests."

"Say no more, dear madam," said Sophia, "I cannot bear to hear my opinion on this subject so strongly confirmed by your's; I, myself, have said something equivalent to this, on the false and the true duty, to Lady Helena, and she felt the truth of what I said so strongly, and I am myself so convinced of it, that I must earnestly request you to drop the subject."

Lady Restormel sighed, and obeyed her. But where was Miss Netherby all this time—the original cause of all the mischief? At dinner time, and not before, it was thought advisable to search for her in the grounds, but no where could she be

found. A letter was, however, brought that evening from her to Lady Helena, in which she said, that, as poor Benny, not being of age, could not be married in England, without consent of guardians, and guardians were gruff old fogrums, he and she had thought proper to ask the aid of the kind blacksmith to rivet their fetters; that she had ridden the first stage on the ass, that there Benny had joined her, and before the week was at an end, she and her hubby should throw themselves at her uncle's feet to crave his blessing, and also his superintendence of the draft of her marriage settlement.

This event was a source of satisfaction to Sophia and Lady Restormel at least, as it gave this obnoxious girl, or would soon give her, a home of her own, and remove her from Lady Helena; but the countess and her daughter could not approve the manner in which the marriage took place, nor believe that Norah could be happy with a weak, thoughtless boy, for whom the

next face he saw might have more attraction than that of his wife; but the union could not be prevented, and they could only hope it would be a happy one.

At the end of the week Lord Restormel was expected, and till the day he was to arrive Lady Helena had worn her arm in a sling, not, as she pretended, to keep Lord Aston in countenance, but because her arm required the support; however, on the day on which he was expected she left off the sling.

"Why is this Helena?" said Lord Aston, who sooner recovered the effects of this accident than his sister did; "surely it would be for your interest to look as suffering and interestingly invalidish in Restormel's eyes as possible, in order to soften his heart in your favor, and make him readily excuse your foolish tricks."

"No, indeed," replied Lady Helena, colouring with violent emotion; "I should scorn to blind Lord Restormel's judgment, by working on his feelings; he shall acquit

or condemn me by his unbiassed judgment, and therefore it is, that I have left off my sling—I am too proud to owe his lenity to his pity."

"Bravo!—thou art a noble girl," said Lord Aston, "and I am really glad I was able, at some risk to myself, to save thee."

"Oh!" cried Lady Helena, throwing herself on his neck; "do not bring back to my mind a scene so horrible; yet as a proof of thy love, my brother! so dear! and see the remembrance has made our Sophia shudder, and her lip turn pale."

"Our Sophia," observed Lord Aston, tenderly, "I dared not have said so; but perhaps one day—"

In a moment Sophia left the room, but evidently not in anger.

When Lord Restormel arrived, his mother begged to see him in her own apartment, that she might tell him what had occurred at the review; and so favorable was the account which his mother gave of the circumstances, that her son could not help exclaiming—"Dear, generous

though rash girl----oh! had she been the victim of her temerity, I think I could not have survived it----it would have broken my heart----but where is she?"

At this moment Lady Helena entered, and while her lover clasped her to his breast, tears trembled in his eyes. "Then you are not hurt my beloved----not hurt at all?"

"Not much," she replied; and as she looked well and blooming at that moment, Lord Restormel was satisfied; but assured her he should presume to lecture her the next day.

It so happened that Lord Restormel sat next Lady Erpingham at dinner that day, and on the opposite side to Lady Helena, who, spite of the pain she felt, persevered in not using her sling; till at last Sophia, who had been watching her countenance, disappeared, and returned with the sling, insisting on her wearing it immediately. As soon as Lord Restormel saw the sling, and also beheld the lip and eye of Lady Helena, he started from his seat, and supporting her in his arms, ex-

claimed—"Then you have all deceived me, and she is hurt!—why this concealment from me, and why did she not wear the sling?"

Lady Helena, now too faint to remain in the room, was led into the air by her lover and her friend; while the latter repeated in Lord Restormel's ear the reply which Lady Helena had made to Lord Aston. Lord Restormel ardently kissed the cold hand which he held, as he heard what she communicated, but he also sighed deeply. Perhaps he thought what he dared not even embody in words to himself, namely, that the woman whose virtues were so sure to throw her faults, however prominent, into the back ground immediately, and could even make a fault the means of bringing forth a virtue, was never likely to be cured of her errors, but would continue to be a source of alternate pride and uneasiness to her lover, or her husband.

CHAP. XIX.

But to return to Julia, to whom Lady Helena and Miss Brightwen wrote almost every day, and who, therefore, knew all Lady Helena's weaknesses, and their results; she also knew, but not from Sophia, that the attachment between her and Lord Aston was now visible to every eye, and that the family were as impatient as Lord Aston for the arrival of the period when he could, with propriety, plead his suit, and Sophia listen to it.

Well, then, at last, said Julia to herself, my best friend will be happy as she deserves to be; but will my dear Helena be happy——it will be her own fault if she is not, and happy she might now be if she would.

"Now, do not think I am romancing," wrote Julia to Sophia, "when I say that I am thankful for not being tried with such

means of perfect happiness as Lady Helena is, because I see that a state of prosperity is one of danger. I am contented to suffer while I know that I do not seek nor make my own suffering, but that the painful circumstances in which I am placed are made for me by others."

But Julia deceived herself, some of her trials she made for herself, by her want of openness of character; had she been ingenuous—had she allowed the eye of faithful friendship to see the bottom of her heart, that heart would have been soon lightened of its heaviest load. The evident change in Aubrey's manner to her, when they were *tête-à-tête,* and in Lady Villeroy's manner to him. The latter every day assumed the appearance of tender attachment, and the former also; but though her presence was no restraint to the expression of Lady Villeroy's fondness for him, that lady's presence evidently restrained the expression of Aubrey's towards her. Another circumstance also occurred which worried though it did not

afflict her; in short, she saw so clouded a future before her, that she felt more and more anxious every day for Fortescue's return, and was eagerly expecting the letter which was to announce it.

One Sunday morning just as she came from church, and had stopped in the dinner parlour to rest herself before she ascended the high stone stairs, she saw a hackney coach stop at the door, and soon after heard a voice, which she thought no stranger to her ear, exclaim---"Pay my coach for me, my fine fellow, I have not a sous, 'pon honor!"

"I have no silver, sir," was the reply.

"No; then ask Julia to give you some, she's rich, so is the old one, but she is stingy."

"Julia, sir; who is that?"

"Why the heiress, Julia Villeroy to be sure; is she not at home."

"Yes, sir, but—"

"No buts, my fine fellow, I will ask her myself; where is she—we are old friends." The door was now thrown open,

and Mansfeldt appeared; "How do, do—how do, do?" said he, putting out his hand, "glad to see you, pale and pretty one."

Julia drew back from his offered hand, and coldly curtsied in silence; but nothing daunted, he leered up in her face, and said, "Lend me a handful of shillings, will you, to pay my coach?"

"I have no silver," she replied.

"No matter, a pound will do just as well."

Julia now remembered what Lord Restormel said of his embarrassments, and pitying, perhaps weakly, his pecuniary distress, she gave him a pound-note, and saw, with a mixed feeling of compassion and contempt, the eager and delighted haste with which he seized it. He then disappeared, leaving Julia full of wonder at seeing him at Lady Villeroy's, as she did not know he was acquainted with her in his prosperous days, and Lady Villeroy was not at all likely to seek acquaintance with him in his adversity.

When he returned she held out her hand for the change, but he only raised it forcibly to his lips, saying—"You and I will settle some other time Julia, for I trust we shall meet again and again, you know we are very fond of each other, are we not?" Here he grinned with a look so malicious and diabolical, that Julia almost shuddered, and was too uncomfortable to reply.

Aubrey now entered the room, and, by their manner of greeting Julia, saw that Mansfeldt came to visit him, and that they were old and intimate friends; her good opinion of Aubrey was not encreased by the discovery, conscious too as she was that Mansfeldt disliked her, and that Aubrey had designs on her; a sensation of alarm and in security came over her, which she had great difficulty in concealing, and she took the earliest opportunity of leaving the room, but not before she had heard Mansfeldt say in a low voice—

"Well, how get you on with the old

lady? will love conquer avarice think you?"

"Oh! my poor father," said Julia, mentally, when she reached her apartment, throwing herself in an agony of tears upon the bed. Is it thus your widow honors your memory! and will she squander your bounty upon an unprincipled man like this! When she was summoned to dinner her eyes bore evident marks of the many tears she had shed, and on her entrance Mansfeldt affectedly exclaimed, "Lo! here she is—like Niobe, all tears."

"Tears indeed!" cried Lady Villeroy, "I cannot think Miss Villeroy what you should be always crying for; but I suppose Captain Fortescue has told you that you look prettiest in tears." At this speech Julia saw Aubrey change colour, and an expression which she could not define passed across his brow.

"What! Marcus, talk to her about pretty looks now? No, no—that is all off; is it not Julia?" said Mansfeldt.

"I know not what you mean, sir," was Julia's reply. "I had a letter from Captain Fortescue to-day."

"What, a love-letter! no, no surely not!" Then turning to Aubrey, he said—"Why I thought Marcus was again after you know whom."

"How can you be so indiscreet," replied Aubrey in a low voice, colouring and frowning at him; then speaking as loud as usual, he said—"I thought all the world knew that Miss Vilkeroy was the betrothed of Captain Fortescue, and he consequently the most enviable and happy man in the world."

"That I doubt, even if Julia be his betrothed; but let that pass."

"To describe Julia's secret agonies while this conversation was passing is impossible; but she forced herself to sit through the dinner and dessert also, lest she should seem to credit what Mansfeldt said; nor dared she trust her voice to reply to it; but she endeavoured to find

amusement in watching her maratre's countenance, while Mansfeldt was cutting up and eating up some nice things intended to be reserved for the dinner of next day, and pouring down bumpers of Madeira,—while Aubrey governing Lady Villeroy with his eye, and seeming to forbid objections with an air of authority, desired a fresh bottle when the first two were finished. It was in vain that Mansfeldt called his hostess Minerva, Juno, Venus, grown becomingly fat, and lastly Queen Elizabeth, and uttered all the comical absurdities he could get together. His attack on the cellar, steeled her heart against his flattery, and when on her rising to leave the room, he, in imitation of the gallant Raleigh threw down his coat for her to walk upon; instead of being charmed by the courteous action, she pettishly exclaimed—"Take up the coat, silly man, directly, it is so dirty it will spoil my carpet!"

"Julia," said she, w' en they were alone "I am really afraid there is some truth

in what that queer man said, for I always thought Captain Fortescue but a slippery blade, so look after him sharply! that is my advice!" Julia did not, could not reply, but hastening to her own room, she laid the burthen of her sorrows at the feet of him, "who heareth prayer;" and arose from her knees, comforted and calm. Lady Villeroy herself came to summon to tea, and seemed surprised to see how composed her countenance was.

"Pray, madam," said Julia, "is it true that Mr. Mansfeldt is likely, as he says, to be your guest often?"

"Oh! dear me! I am sure I hope not; did you not see what an appetite he has, and then he drinks like a fish: I am glad to find you paid this coach hire, I was afraid it would be charged to me in the bill. No, no, once a week will be too often—and I am happy to say he cannot come oftener, for he can only go out on a Sunday for fear of being arrested."

"Is he very intimate with Mr. Aubrey?"

"A very old friend of his indeed; therefore, I let him come; I cannot disoblige Mr. Aubrey. It is so convenient for a rich widow to have a cousin in the law—I get my law business done for nothing."

"But is Mr. Aubrey a practising lawyer? Why not much; as to that he was brought up to the law, but the women spoiled him, and he was abroad with a mistress, a married woman, many years; but now he repents, and is quite reformed; and really if a woman does marry again, it is proper and necessary that she should choose for a husband, a man who knows something of business, and can take care of her affairs himself; for your lawyers, and stewards, and agents, are rapacious wretches, my dear, take my word for it." Julia said nothing, she only sighed while she thought of her father; but she earnestly wished that Fortescue was returned, and she removed from the improper protection of this weak and narrow-hearted woman. Nothing worth relating occurred

during the rest of the evening, but Mansfeldt was so disagreeable, though meaning to be otherwise, that Julia, spite of her disinterestedness, was very glad that he was unable to visit more than once a week. Still, how earnestly on many accounts did she desire the return of Fortescue! But her removal from her present unsuitable residence was sooner effected than she even hoped for. After giving her, when alone with him, unequivocal marks of his evident designs on her heart, short of making a positive declaration, Aubrey one morning ventured to seek her in her dressing-room, when he thought Lady Villeroy was out, and there he professed for her the most ardent and devoted of passions, declaring that he never truly loved till then, and till she was irrevocably the bride of Captain Fortescue, he never, never would give up the hope of calling her his. Unknown to him, the door was ajar, and while the distressed and offended Julia was vainly struggling to free her hand and waist from his bold grasp, Lady Villeroy, who from her own

room had watched him to Julia's apartment, now threw open the door, and pale and trembling stood in a paroxysm of passion before them ; I will not stain my pages with all the just abuse of Aubrey, and unjust accusations of Julia, which the enraged and jealous woman vented on the guilty and the innocent offender ; I shall only state that the vituperation ended in a command that Julia should quit the house that very day, or if allowed to stay, as she requested to do, till she could write to her friends and receive an answer, she was to do so only on condition that she never exchanged a word with Mr. Aubrey, who long before the storm ended had quietly withdrawn himself from its fury and left the house ; fortunately Captain Fortescue arrived at this very moment, and Julia, like a frightened bird, flew into his arms for shelter and protection ! Fear makes every one fond, and never before had Fortescue been so satisfied with any reception which Julia had given him. All her coldness, all her reserve was gone, she seemed to cling to him as her

only friend, her support, preserver, her lover, and every tender name in one—her husband! and while he folded her meagre form to his breast, and laid his glowing cheek to her pale and tearful one, he thought that though he might have loved more passionately before, he had never loved so sweetly and so tenderly! But Fortescue at length discovered that Julia's emotion did not proceed entirely from joy of his return, for she exclaimed at last—"Oh! take me away! take me away from hence directly?" Julia could not have laid on her lover a command which he was more willing to obey, as he had always disapproved her resolution to remain with her mother-in-law.

"Most gladly would I do so," he replied—"but why this hurry, Julia?"

"Oh! I am turned out! desired to go by Lady Villeroy!"

"And wherefore?"

"The cause is too absurd to relate," replied Julia, blushing, "but do not leave me here, take me with you!"

"I will not leave you, my beloved girl," replied Fortescue, "but you shall not go away with me, and me alone; no Julia, my mother, my sister, or our dear Miss Brightwen—Aston's Miss Brightwen, for such she now avowedly is, shall come to fetch you away, and in a manner befitting your situation in life."

"Oh! no, I cannot remain here till they come!"

"Yes you can, for they are in London; they arrived to-day, as the drawing-room is a week sooner than was expected." Then ringing for his servant, he wrote a few lines, and desired him to take them instantly to South Audley Street. "And then, my own Julia, safe under the protection of the best of women, you shall only leave her protection for that of her most happy son!" As he said this, Julia looked up earnestly, searchingly, and touchingly in his face; then, as if overcome by some sudden and overwhelming emotion, she fell back in his arms as if in the embrace of death. The violence with which the terrified Fortescue

rang the bell, alarmed even Lady Villeroy, and she rushed into the room, but seeing what had happened, she coolly desired Miss Villeroy's maid would see after her mistress, for that she did not understand fits.

"What means this unnatural barbarity, madam?" cried Fortescue, as soon as Julia was recovered, and the maid had left the room, "what can that unoffending sweetness have done, for you to treat her thus?"

"Done! I only found a cousin of mine in her dressing-room making love to her—that's all!"

"How!" he exclaimed, gasping for breath, "but it is impossible; I was to blame to believe it even for an instant. Julia, my love, speak and resent the infamous charge."

"It is a true charge," replied Julia, forcing a smile; "but, as Lady Villeroy knows the love was made against my will, the scene was full as disagreeable to me as it was to her."

" 'Tis false ; my cousin is not a man to have hazarded such conduct had he not been led to suppose it would not be disagreeable."

" Who is this gentleman, madam ?" said Fortescue turning very pale ; " what is his name, and where does he live ?"

" Do not tell him ! I conjure you not to tell him," cried Julia ; " do you not see what you have done ?" Lady Villeroy understood her, and being as much alarmed for consequences to Aubrey as Julia was for Fortescue, she declared that she would not reveal the name of the gentleman, and she hoped Julia would be equally discreet. Fortescue, on the contrary, was resolved not to let Julia rest till he had heard on this subject all that she could possibly tell, for her concealment of the name might proceed from regard for the unknown as well as for himself, and jealousy is usually inseparable from love. But in the midst of this unpleasant altercation, Lady Erpingham's carriage drove up, and the countess sent in her name. Lady Villeroy, however, refused

to see her; and leaving her maid to collect her things together, Julia eagerly seized Fortescue's arm, having vainly tried to shake Lady Villeroy's hand in friendship before they parted, and in another moment she was seated by the side of her mother's friend, and clasped to her maternal bosom. Fortescue was in South Audley Street, where they had hired a house for a month, as soon as they were; he also found his sister and Sophia just returned from a walk; they were mourning together over the account he gave them of Julia's altered looks, when Julia appeared; at sight of each dear familiar face, she felt herself quite well; nay more, quite happy? When the first emotions of meeting, and with the added joy of knowing they were met not soon to part again, had subsided, Captain Fortescue with more perturbation than he wished, desired leave to lay his case before them, and to ask whether they did not think he had great reason to be jealous, for that, even by Julia's own confession, he had a rival who was allowed to make love to her

in her dressing-room. His audience, when he had told his tale, were clearly of his opinion, and called on Julia for her defence; and when she had given her statement, beginning with Aubrey's first arrival in Gloucester Place, then describing Mansfeldt's visit, her conversation with Lady Villeroy, and lastly, the scene in her dressing-room, she was declared fully exculpated, and Fortescue forbidden to be jealous. He was also forbidden to know the name of his rival, and Julia was pronounced fully equal to defend herself from his pursuit, and revenge her own quarrels. Fortescue was obliged to submit to the decision, nor could he be jealous with any reason of this uknown lover, for he could not be, as he at first was inclined to think him, the cause of Julia's mysterious coldness, as that existed long before, according to her own account, she had ever seen this man; and certainly in Julia's reception of him that day, there was every mark of the fondest attachment; therefore, he dismissed his jealousy, but still he wished the cir-

cumstance had not happened, and he wished still more, that he knew the name of the unknown.

The next day, when Julia, whose spirits had been kept up the day before, and her cheek flushed from the joy she felt in being reunited to her friends, made her appearance at breakfast, she excited general alarm in all who beheld her. Lord Aston had never seen her before, and he, when he surveyed her thin form and pale cheek, looked at his brother with a glance expressive of the tenderest pity, while the rest of the party, who had known her a fat and blooming girl, could scarcely conceal the anxiety which she occasioned them. Marcus, indeed, was so distressed that he suddenly left the room, and sent for the earl out, to conjure him to let his mother hasten with Julia immediately to Clifton, or Hastings, or whithersoever the medical men should advise them to go; and begging him to suggest to Sophia the necessity of urging Julia to have advice directly. The equally affectionate and alarmed

hearts of his mother, his sister, and Sophia, had already suggested all he wished; and Julia, though declaring her conviction that she was quite well, but had been prayed upon by the disagreeableness of her late situation, consented readily to have advice, and also to oblige Fortescue, though assured by the physician that her complaint was only nervous; she as readily consented to go to Clifton, as soon as Lady Erpingham and her other friends could accompany her.

In the meanwhile she seemed to recover her looks daily for many successive days, but suddenly she drooped again; and on asking Lady Helena whose plan it was that she should go to Clifton, and hearing it was Fortescue's, she changed colour, and burst into tears; an emotion which Lady Helena very naturally attributed to the proof which the proposal was of her lover's tender anxiety.

The next day Fortescue went down to Bristol, where an old friend of his resided, and on whose account he preferred Clifton

to Hastings, in order to see if he could find a convenient house or lodging in the neighbourhood, for his mother and her guests ; and having succeeded to his satisfaction, he returned in high spirits, but was evidently disappointed at the excessive coldness with which Julia received his delighted assurance, that he had hired an excellent house, with a beautiful garden to it, within a short drive of the Wells.

" I would rather have gone anywhere than to Clifton," replied Julia, almost pettishly ; and while Fortescue changed colour, and stood speechless with painful and almost angry surprise, Julia attributed his change of countenance and silence to other causes, and to conceal her agony suddenly quitted him.

" That dear girl is very ill, Helena, very ill, indeed !" said he to his sister, " for her temper is changed, and she is grown pettish, and difficult to please !"

" She must be ill indeed, then," replied Lady Helena ; " where is she ?" but, without waiting for his reply, she went to

Julia's apartment, and found her in tears; but she persisted to declare that she had nothing to reveal, as their medical attendant and her friend believed they had their source only in physical suffering; but Lady Helena lamented that the ceremony of her presentation, which she would fain have deferred till Julia could be presented with her, would keep Lady Erpingham in London some days, and prevent their instant removal to Clifton.

CHAP. XX.

If Julia's appearance at court was comparatively a time of indifference to Lady Helena, it was one of positive anxiety to Lord Restormel; for, as yet, Lady Helena had never been in the court circle; and few men besides himself and Lord Clanross, who had pretensions to address her, had been admitted in the circle of Laurel Grove. But now she would be exposed to the admiration and addresses of men, of higher rank than himself, and also to all the dangers and temptations of a London life; for it was the earl's intention to remain two or three months at least in London, that Lady Helena might see something of high life; and (which he earnestly desired) might see enough of its emptiness and heartlessness, to settle down cheerfully as a domestic married woman: and though forced to live in the metropolis

when her lord attended his parliamentary duties, should only wish to enjoy the best and only precious privilege of a residence in London, namely, that of assembling round her table, those persons, of both sexes, distinguished for their talents, their learning, their conversational powers, and their public and private virtues.

The earl also wished to give Lady Helena an opportunity of being convinced, that she preferred Lord Restormel to all other men; for, hitherto, she had only seen him where he had none to compete with him. But Lord Restormel himself, now that the time for this opportunity of conviction to Lady Helena was arrived, shrunk from it with all the timidity and self-distrust of a man who truly loves; and when he heard that Mr. Seebright, Lady Helena's cousin, told every one that, though Lady Helena had accepted Lord Restormel, it was only on condition that they were quite free to part, if he or she desired it: he felt himself a prey to jealous apprehension, vague in its objects, indeed,

at present, but looking forward to its having only too soon an object and a particular cause.

I dare not analyze with accuracy the feelings of Lady Helena, when the day of her appearance at court arrived. Often, during her intercourse with Lady Restormel and her lover, her self-consequence and pride had been wounded, and especially since she had heard certain hints and insinuations from Norah Netherby, by the idea that the former, at least, thought her inferior to her son in worth, and that it was a great favour done to her to be accepted as the bride of Restormel; while her lover, she thought, valued his hand and heart at so high a rate, that he imagined a woman ought to make any sacrifices, with cheerfulness, to ensure a continuance of his favour, and a fulfilment of his promises; "but, surely," whispered pride, "I, Lady Helena Fortescue, an earl's daughter, with a large independent fortune, and with no mean personal or mental advantages, have a right to expect

to require not make sacrifices; therefore I would not have Restormel too sure of obtaining me after all!"

But, what said love? what said justice? as Lady Helena looked on her lover's expressive countenance, gazed on his manly form, and listened to the touching eloquence of his heart, breathed in the deep and mellow tone of his persuasive voice, and above all, when her judgment dwelt on the long list of his public and private virtues; it told, indeed, a different story to that of self-love; it talked of the joy of making sacrifices for such a man, and Lady Helena, with a sigh, wished herself already the wedded wife of Restormel.

Not long before the expected day arrived, Lady Helena received the following letter, dated from Restormel's house in Berkely Square:

"Here I am, dear girl, come to London, and I want your assistance and advice. You must go with me to my milliner's, for, spite of age and approaching infirmities, I am going to the drawing-room. One of my motives, my wish to

pay my duty to my sovereign on his accession to the throne; but there is yet another and a dearer motive, Helena, the wish to see my son's future bride presented, and enjoy the admiration which she cannot fail to excite. I go also to do her the honor and pay her all the respect in my power, and prove my approbation of Restormel's choice. Yes, Helena, not only your own real mother shall emerge from her long years of retirement, and struggle with indisposition, in order to introduce her child, but she who is your mother only in heart and prospect, will once more make an effort to overcome illness, and distaste to such scenes, and enjoy the expected triumph of the child of her affection, and the son of her bosom. But you must come and choose a dress for me worthy the occasion, and of you.

"Your affectionate

"Olivia Restormel."

When Lady Helena read this letter the first time, it was with unmixed feelings of delighted and grateful surprise; but on the second and third reading she fancied it

was intended to impress her with a sense of obligation for the great honor she meant to do her, and was an ostentatious, offensive claim on her gratitude. Besides, it seemed as if she wished to show the world that Lady Helena was really property, and that Lady Restormel, by appearing at court, in her party, after an absence of many years from such places, meant to mark out that Lady Helena was the betrothed wife of her son, and, flattering condescension! with her entire approbation. But the next moment Lady Helena chid herself for ingratitude and waywardness of feeling, and was really ashamed of herself when Sophia, to whom she showed the letter, saw in it nothing but what the affectionate writer meant, and wondered Lady Helena could be so long putting on her hat and shawl, when she was to see Lady Restormel, after having received such a letter from her.

Lady Helena went and found the welcome all her best feelings could desire, and her bad ones for awhile, at least, slumbered, and she forgot what she now too often remembered, namely, that Lord Res-

tormel loved her against his judgment, and Lady Restormel permitted his addressing her against her will.

At length the hour of presentation arrived, and Julia and Sophia, almost wishing they could have been of the party, saw the earl and countess accompanied by Captain Fortescue and Lady Helena set off for court. Lord Aston had attended the levee, but was unable to attend the drawing-room, as his little boy was very ill, and he was forced to go to Laurel Grove. Lady Restormel went with her son; her expectations that Lady Helena would be generally admired were fulfilled to their utmost extent; but while Lord Restormel beheld with fearful pleasure the evident triumph of his mistress, he was equally proud of the marked respect and welcome admiration with which his still lovely mother had been received; and, as he led her through the rooms, dividing his attention between her and Lady Helena, the latter overheard two young men say to each other. "Look, there's Restormel; no eyes, as usual, but for his old mother; and really she is a

noble and beautiful looking ruin; it is a pity he cannot marry her, I am sure he will never marry, for he can never cordially love or admire any other woman, for he thinks her a paragon, and the only woman therefore worthy him."

This was poison to the feelings of Lady Helena, and when Lord Restormel approached her, after having procured a seat for his mother till her carriage could get up, she received him with such coldness, and turned with such eagerness to resume her conversation with a young marquis just returned from abroad, who had not rested till he was presented to her, so fascinated had he been with her appearance, that all the anticipated pangs of jealousy were, he found, nothing to what he at that moment experienced, and he almost regretted that his necessary attention to the parent whom he idolized, forced him to leave Lady Helena to the services and attentions of the marquis.

As they drove home, Lady Restormel, unconscious of what had happened to distress her son, complimented him on the

complete success which had attended the woman of his heart, and wondered at his cold replies. "During the little time," said she, "that I stayed in the rooms, I observed a little circle of admirers had gathered round her; but who was that tall, elaborately dressed young man, who seemed so particularly attentive to her?"

"That travelled coxcomb," replied Lord Restormel, changing colour; "oh, that was the Marquis of L.; so you observed his attention, did you?"

"Yes, but not with pain;" then laying her hand expressively on his arm, she added in the words of Iago, smiling as she did so, "Oh, my lord, beware of jealousy!"

Lord Restormel forced a smile, but was glad to be prevented replying by their arrival in Berkeley Square, whence he was going to South Audley Street to learn if Lady Helena was returned, when he was summoned to his mother in her dressing-room, who, having at the impulse of affection, made an effort beyond her strength, had fallen into a long and deep swoon, and had, on her recovery, desired to see her

physician and her son. The latter when he saw her, and heard what had happened, forgot his jealousy, and even his love, in terror for his mother's life.

Lady Helena returned home in high spirits; her vanity had been gratified to the utmost, and her heart also, for she saw how devoted to her the heart of her lover was, spite of the remark she had overheard by his change of colour and countenance, when she received him so coldly, and talked with Lord L.; and all her best feelings led her to glory in having subjected the guarded heart of such a man. Lady Helena's filial love also led her to enjoy the openly avowed pleasure which her parents felt from her reception from royalty, and the sort of sensation which she excited, while Fortescue bluntly exclaimed, "On the word of a sailor, my mother and you, Helena, were the most beautiful women at court."

"For shame, Marcus," cried the countess, "what gross flattery to name me with your young sister."

"He only speaks the truth of you," said the earl affectionately; "and even while I recalled the pride and pleasure with which I first led you, Augusta, into that circle, I gazed on you at that moment with equal, if not greater pleasure, from feeling how much the wife was dearer than the bride. As to Helena she is young and new, else—"

"What else?" said Helena; "something meant in paternal prudence to mortify my vanity, I dare say; but, oh, those precious tears!" she exclaimed, seeing that her father's observation had affected her mother. "What a happy woman shall I be, if, after being five and thirty years a wife, I may be able to shed them, and for such a cause!"

"They are sweet and precious tears, indeed," said the countess. "But, my dear lord, I cannot allow you to think that Helena is not quite as handsome, if not handsomer than I am."

Julia and Miss Brightwen smiled with heartfelt, though transient pleasure, at the

account given by Fortescue of the praises he had heard of his sister's beauty and grace; but the joy of the first was soon clouded again by some unknown causes, and that of the latter by a letter from Lord Aston, stating, that he had carried down his own travelling physician with him, who had known his son from his birth, and that he had declared that he believed his only chance for life was being removed into his native air—that of Nice; that he must therefore take him thither immediately, and that his friend thought his own health would also be benefitted by the change.

This letter distressed the whole party, as well as Sophia, especially as Lady Erpingham was not strong enough to undertake the care of a sick child; and though Lady Helena was willing to accompany her brother, and even give up the society of her lover, and the as yet untasted delights of London for his sake; her parents themselves, and Lord Aston, they were very sure, would not accept such a sacrifice.

Lord Aston soon followed his letter, and in such evident dejection that Sophia could scarcely bear to witness it, and could not grudge him the consolation of hearing her confess the misery the sight of his occasioned her. As soon as ever Lord Aston thought that decorum could not be violated by his confession of his love to Sophia, he had disclosed it to her, and received from her an avowal of mutual attachment—an attachment as tender as his own. "Ah, no!" replied Lord Aston, "that is impossible Sophia, you were tenderly attached to another; but I never really loved any woman but you."

"But he whom I loved," she replied, "was not the friend of one whom I doted on, and doted on by him. Oh, Lord Aston! when I remember how many ties bind me to you, and reflect what joy our union would give to him we have lost, if he were permitted to witness it, I feel a tenderness and a nearness of union with you, which I could not have, and never could have had with any other man."

"I believe it," replied he, "and that makes me hope, and emboldens me:" but he suddenly quitted her, leaving the sentence unfinished; and Sophia was depressed and absent the whole of the ensuing day, though she tried to interest herself in Lady Helena, and her vicissitudes of feeling. "Why do you keep your court head-dress on, Lady Helena," said she.

"Oh! because Mrs. W. is at home this evening, and Mrs. Seebright and I are going thither."

"Is Lord Restormel going also?"

"I declare I never asked him," was the answer; "but I know Lord L. will be there, for he told me so."

"And who is Lord L?"

"Oh, the Marquis of L., such a sweet creature!"

"I do not like the term, Lady Helena."

"Pretty prude, why not?"

"Would Lord Restormel like to hear you call any man a sweet creature."

"Perhaps not; but he must learn to like many things he does not like now, or

I may like Lord L., who knows?----it is very evident that he likes me, and has no paragon mother."

"Lady Helena!"

"Miss Brightwen!"

"Where is Lord Restormel?"

"Aye, where indeed----petting his mamma, I dare say, and can't spare time to pet me."

"So, so, it is only pique then, and I am easy."

"No, indeed, it is not pique only; I am in earnest, and Lord L. is in earnest, and only think it is almost time to dress for dinner, and no Restormel I declare; I will go to Mrs. W.'s whether he does or not."

Soon after Lord Restormel entered, and Lady Helena was going to show him by her manner that she was displeased at his long absence, when one glance at his pale cheek and altered mien substituted tender alarm, for resentment, in her bosom, and she asked him what had happened?

Lord Restormel could only answer,

"My mother, my poor mother! the exertion has been too much for her." He then told her that she was ordered to a foreign climate instantly. Away fled every feeling but those of pity, sorrow, and self-reproach from Lady Helena's heart. "And she wishes to see you, Helena," he added, "if not inconvenient to you, but I fear by that head-dress—"

"Fear nothing," she replied, tears streaming down her cheeks, as she hastily quitted him. She returned with her hair divested of its ornaments, and in a plain evening dress. "Now, then," said she, "take me to your dear mother instantly."

Sophia on hearing this, suddenly rose and kissed her cheek.

"Why was that?" said Lord Restormel.

"Lady Helena understands it," said Sophia, "and that is enough; so go, and ask no questions;" but a servant now came to say that Lady Restormel was too ill to see any one, she had evidently broken a blood vessel. Lady Helena's visit was con-

sequently delayed, but every feeling dearest to her heart made her refuse to go to Mrs. W.'s. assembly. It was well for her companions that she did so, as spite of her great anxiety for Lady Restormel, Lady Helena was able, from her powers of active love, and benevolent wish to forget her own cares in those of others, to keep up the painfully depressed spirits of every one in her family circle. Lord Aston had left them early to go and meet his children and their nurses on their road to London, and conduct them to the house of a friend of his, where they were to remain till every thing was ready for their setting off for the continent; but Sophia's spirits did not rise when she ceased to see his dejected countenance, and it was evident that she had something unusual weighing on her mind. That evening, before they separated for the night, Lord and Lady Erpingham requested to have a few moments conversation with her in her dressing-room. The conference was shorter, much shorter than they expected. The earl

was the speaker, and he began by begging Sophia to forgive him and the countess, if they, as parents, anxious for a child's happiness, ventured to say what Lord Aston could not, and would not presume to ask for himself.

"He could not ask what it is my duty to deny, my lord," was Sophia's eager reply.

"Heaven bless you for saying so," exclaimed the countess.

"But hear why Aston hesitates to do what we are going to do, it is, because he feels he has no right to cast the least shade on a character and conduct hitherto so spotless, by requesting you, in defiance of the world's censure, to let him lead you to the altar before the usual time has elapsed since the death of his wife, that you may be the companion of his journey, and the sharer of his duties; he has told you, perhaps, that poor little Everard is always saying, 'But where is dear, dear Miss Brightwen? she would make me well.'"

"No, indeed, he was too delicate to do

so under the existing circumstances," replied Sophia, struggling with her tears, "but let me hasten to say, that though I think under most circumstances it is one of the first duties of a woman to avoid the censure of the world if possible, it is not so in my case, and my first duty is to the object of my love and his dear children."

"Oh, welcome hearing!" cried the earl.

"Yes, my lord, I am only an obscure individual, scarcely known, and certainly not much valued out of your own circle and that I once filled in Norfolk, and if Lord Aston is willing to brave the censure he may incur by marrying me so soon, I have no right to shrink from it, and it will be his wife whom he exposes to it, not the humble Sophia Brightwen; and believe me that the cloud you witnessed on my brow this evening proceeded from my wish to offer to accompany Lord Aston as his wife, and the attached, affectionate nurse of his child, and struggling with the consciousness that delicacy forbade me to express that wish. Oh! my dear lord, you

have removed such a weight from my heart."

"And so have you from ours, ingenuous, right-hearted, sound-headed woman," replied Lord Erpingham; "happy will the man be who calls you wife, and the children that call you mother! all then that we now wait for is your father's consent, for that I will apply to-morrow." It was with a heart even more than usually grateful that Sophia that night offered up her thanks to the being who had created, and had so bountifully blessed her. Lord Aston came to breakfast the next day, little imagining what his father had done for him, and what happiness awaited him! It was then settled that at the end of a week he should receive the hand of Sophia from her father, who was to come to town for the purpose, and then set off for Dover with his bride and family: on the evening of the morning, which blessed Lord Aston with the prospect of calling Sophia his before he left England, Lady Restormel, who had a previous conference with Sophia, requested to see

Lady Helena, and with a beating heart the latter obeyed the summons.

"They are positive and peremptory with me my dearest girl," said she, as she tenderly welcomed the weeping Helena, "and they insist on my leaving England directly."

"But who is to go with you?" hastily interrupted Lady Helena.

"Oh! kind friends, but not Restormel; he is eager to acompany me, though at a sacrifice which would, I know, tear his heart—that of leaving you, but I will not accept it; besides, he has public duties to perform. I did for a moment think of asking Lord Erpingham to allow your union to take place directly, if you were not averse to it, that you might both accompany me abroad; but this would have been mere selfishness, and I also felt that all the objections to Restormel's being united to you now, and all your father's wise reasons against it, remain in their full force, therefore I am contented to go without him and you; but if it pleases the disposer of events to spare my life till I can

embrace you as my daughter in the place of my exile, I shall indeed think I have lived long enough, and shall depart in peace ?" Here she threw herself on Lady Helena's neck, who wept in agitated silence. "But it will not be," she continued, recovering her composure, "we must part, Helena, and I feel that we shall part for ever in this world."

"Do not, do not say so."

"I must, for it is the truth, but do not tell Restormel so; I therefore wish to perform the duty I owe you before I go, as we go very soon, and my companions on the journey, that is those with whom I travel in company, will be Lord Aston and his bride."

"I am so glad to hear it! Sophia will do for you all I could, and better too."

"No, not better, I have an excellent memory, and 'till this warm heart is cold, there will you be enthroned, Helena!"

"Oh! I am not worthy, I am not indeed of such."

"Hush! I will not hear you on such

a theme; and now hear me, Helena, had I remained here, you would, strange as it may seem to you, have found a more indulgent judge of your actions in me than in Restormel. The gratitude I owed you, and the knowledge I obtained of your noble qualities, conquered all my prejudices against you, and I gave my heart to you without reserve! But having done so, I felt myself pledged, even by my self-love, to excuse or overlook your faults if ever they should force themselves upon me, and if I, the severe Lady Restormel, approved you, who should dare to question the propriety of my son's choice? Yet I believe I am not doing justice to my heart either, for you have so twined yourself round that heart, that my affection alone was sufficient to make me excuse you however you might err, and when you lose me, you will lose the firmest and most indulgent of friends."

"When I lose you! talk not so, I cannot listen to it."

"Bear with me a little longer: I must

repeat, if you love Restormel be on your guard—he is proud, not more perhaps than becomes him; yet now, on the verge of the grave and of eternity, I feel the folly and the presumptuous daring of all pride, even the pride of virtue; but proud he is, and rigid he is in his ideas respecting the conduct of women, and spite of your charms, and of his consciousness of your power, the latter heightened no doubt by the obstacles which I opposed to his ever thinking of you as a wife, I am very certain that he would have struggled with his passion whatever it had cost him, had not your virtue made me also your conquest, and that the saviour of his mother became more lovely in his eyes than ever, and he was your's without one struggle, and without one evidence of your being changed in any one respect; but now the circumstances are materially altered—he has given you his invaluable heart, and you have given him your's in exchange. Now, then, Restormel considers you as bound by duties, and so far he is right; a

betrothed mistress is bound by ties nearly as much as a wife, and I am much deceived if Restormel will not expect little surrenders of your will to him now, as much as if you were his wife; and, if you really love him as much as he deserves to be loved, you will make them, Helena."

"But if he loves me, will he not be willing to make surrenders of his will to me? is not the obligation mutual?"

"In some cases, and in some points certainly, but not in those trifles in which a lover is tenacious, and which tenacity is often caused by a degree of delicate jealousy and holy admiration which a woman ought to delight in and to respect, even though it be often troublesome!"

"But how can one delight in what is troublesome, and often, perhaps, frivolous and vexatious?"

"What a lover exacts can never seem frivolous and vexatious in the eye of a woman who is really in love. I shall leave your heart to answer that question for me."

"But to what trifles do you allude? Can those who love quarrel about trifles?"

"Yes, and commonly about trifles only; yet, trifles having serious results—dress, for instance, a handkerchief too open, a tucker too low, a petticoat too short, a manner too flirting with other men, dancing with other men—waltzing I know you never indulge in; but should Restormel, justly or not, venture to find fault with your dress or your manner, I earnestly hope you will not let your woman's pride induce you to disregard what he says, but that you will think that noble heart worthy the surrender even of your better judgment on some points. If you are capable of this high-minded sacrifice, you will, you must be a happy woman, and my son a happy man; if not, you will never be happy united, for I foresee that you will part and be unhappy; but this is too horrible a prospect for me to dwell upon, it kills me. Now, farewell! dearest, dearest girl! I never loved woman as I love you! and to part with you is such agony, that I

cannot endure it again! Helena, think that you have heard me speak as if it was a voice from the tomb, and respect it accordingly! Heaven bless you! I can, and will pray for you long after I cease to see you, but I can bear to see you no longer! one more embrace, and then farewell for ever!"

Lady Helena again and again precipitated herself into those arms which now resigned, and now recalled her again, as if she foreboded that they indeed were never to meet more; and on Lord Restormel's entering, who came to announce the physician, she was led from the room by him in an agony of tender and overwhelming emotion.

"Why are you thus agitated, my beloved girl?" cried he, "I never saw you thus before; what has my mother said to you?"

"She has spoken like herself, but do not ask me to repeat what she said—I cannot; all I now wish is to go home and to bed."

Lord Restormel dared not enquire further, for he feared to hear that his mother had said that they should never meet again. While Lord Aston, and Sophia, and Lady Restormel, remained in London, Lady Helena devoted herself entirely to them, but she never was allowed to see the latter alone again, nor to take leave of her; with these precautions, Lady Restormel was better when she set off for Dover, whither her son accompanied her; Lord Aston the same morning received the hand of Sophia, and set off on his journey. The parting between Sophia and Julia was a very melancholy one, and the former could scarcely have been easy to leave her pupil, and one so long, one of the dearest objects of her affections behind her, even with friends so near and so beloved, had she not hoped that when seas rolled between them, distance and absence might open Julia's now closed heart to her entreaties, and that she would disclose to her at length the cause of that uneasiness which was evidently preying on her health, and

clouding over her prospects. Lord Aston had, to the joy of Sophia, invited Julia to accompany them abroad, but she had positively refused to do so; Captain Fortescue had also objected to it, but had promised, when Julia was his wife, to join Lord and Lady Aston at Nice, and to this arrangement Julia seemed to consent by her silence. At the earnest entreaty of Fortescue, Lady Erpingham and Julia went to Clifton the day after the travellers left London, and Lord Erpingham and Lady Helena remained in South Audley Street; but as London did not agree long with Lord Erpingham's health, he frequently went to Laurel Grove, leaving his daughter to partake of the pleasures of London under the protection of Mrs. Seebright.

CHAP. XXI.

It is not my intention to follow Lady Helena to Almack's, and to all the various scenes of fashionable gaiety into which her dissipated friend led her, and in which the admiration she excited, and perhaps encouraged, gave many a jealous pang to the heart of her lover, and I may say, offended his sense of propriety, and militated in his opinion against his rights; but the attentions of Lord L. were so marked, that Lord Restormel thought, as a woman of honour, and one whose affections were already engaged, Lady Helena ought to discourage them. Lady Helena reasoned differently, and wrote thus to Lady Aston on the subject :—" I own that I am greedy of admiration, but not for its own sake, but Restormel's, ungrateful wretch as he is; and I wish, I confess, that Lord L. may

lay his strawberry-leaves and balls at my feet, that I may say to my dear lover, 'See what I refuse for your sake! a marquis, and the best dressed man in London;' but he says, 'As you know you never mean to marry Lord L. you are making him unhappy by seeming to encourage his suit.' I reply, 'He will be so angry at any woman's being able to refuse him, that he will be heart-whole again in a minute; besides it would be conceited and indelicate in me to act as if I supposed a man was in love with me, till he had really told me so;' on which he shakes his wise head; we quarrel, and make it up again; but the other evening, just as I had almost promised Lord L. to waltz with him in came Lord Restormel, and, pale as death, said in a low voice, 'What are you going to do, Lady Helena, surely not to join the waltzers? but, forgive me! I affronted you by believing it possible, even for a moment.' I could not deceive such generous confidence; I therefore gave him my hand, and desired him to lead me to a seat, feeling

a little nervous at the possibility there was that when Lord L., who had been called away, should return, he would come and claim me as one who had promised to waltz with him. I was right, for he exclaimed, 'Come, Lady Helena, the waltz is begun!' 'What, then, my lord! I am not going to join it.' 'But, you promised you would.' 'No, not absolutely promised, I am sure; and your wishes deceived you.' 'One's wishes often deceive us, I own,' he replied, with a sigh which he meant to be tender, but only looked affected, 'but, are you in earnest now?' 'Positively, I will not waltz!' He bowed, looked piqued at me, and I thought queerly at Restormel, and taking his brother by the arm, went into another apartment. 'Lady Helena!' said Restormel, 'answer me. If I had not come in when I did, would you not have waltzed with that coxcomb?' 'I am not quite sure, but I think I should.' 'Then it was fear of me, not a principle against the dance itself, that now withheld you?' 'Love

of you, not fear, my lord! I did not like to give you pain; when fear influences my actions, in any thing relating to you, I shall have ceased to love you, for perfect love, you know, casteth out fear.' I was not conscious of the strength of my own words, till I saw their effect on him; but I saw that he forgot every thing, but the assurance from my lips—' guileless lips,' he calls them—that my love for him was perfect, a truth the poor man is often inclined to doubt, and so am I too. But, he is a darling! and I wish I had dukes and princes at my feet, to sacrifice to him! Mem. Do you not think dukes and princes are much obliged to me?"

In reply Lady Aston wrote—" Foolish Helena! Lord Restormel would esteem the sacrifice of one eccentricity, one wrong habit to his wishes, of far more value than the sacrifice of dukes, princes, and marquisses. You are wrong, my dear sister! it is not honourable in an engaged woman, for such you know yourself to be, whatever pretty, prating Mrs. Seebright

may choose to tell your danglers, ever to wish to make conquests, and the motive in you, does not sanction the deed. Is the poor father or mother excused from punishment, who steals a loaf only to save a child from starving? No; and yet the motive is a natural and amiable one. My sweet girl, what is become of your understanding? what guardian of your principles, lost in the whirl of London I suppose; and your principles, for want of this guardian are running riot: pray get out of the whirl as fast as possible."

Lady Helena was self-condemned long before this letter reached her, for Lord L. was going to give a grand ball, at Almack's rooms, and it was known to be given in honour of Lady Helena Fortescue.

This news irritated Lord Restormel so much, that he reproached Lady Helena more justly than discreetly, and demanded her leave to call on the marquis, and tell him that he was her accepted lover; but this permission she dared not give him,

lest a duel should be the result of the meeting, according to the heathenish laws of modern honour.

"Then tell him so yourself."

"What! before he gives me a proper opportunity. Impossible! how indelicate!"

"It is better to act indelicately, than dishonourably, madam! You mean to lead Lord L. on to propose to you, and then to refuse him!"

"Are you sure I mean to refuse him! my lord."

"Distraction! do you put that question to me seriously?"

"Lord Restormel, I may refuse Lord L., but can I, dare I marry a man who is so jealous and so violent as you are?"

"Jealous! I am only jealous of your good name in this case. I would wish you to act as becomes an honourable woman, and if you go to this ball, you are not an honourable woman; and my objection to marry you, would be as great as yours you say is to marry me."

"Do you threaten me, my lord? and do you mean to say that I know not right from wrong, honour from dishonour, as well as yourself? My lord, I will be in no man's leading-strings. I am myself the guardian of my honour, and do not need so insolent a monitor?"

"Lady Helena! Lady Helena! do you remember who says the words you now quote? are her words befitting your pure lips?"

"It was a fair penitent, so called, who spoke them, and so far they suit me; for I shall be one soon, I dare say, but I am not now, so leave me: the longer you stay, the wider the breach will be; but, take notice, I will go to Lord L.'s ball."

Lord Restormel instantly snatched his hat up and departed, closing the door with violence.

Lady Helena had been angry, because she suspected she was wrong; but she could not bear to see how easily Lord Restormel could think her so, and how deeply he resented her rebellion to his

wishes; but she felt as he did, that she ought not to go to Lord L.'s entertainment, and she knew not how to reconcile her offended pride, tenaciousness of her own will, and her sense of duty. At this juncture she received a letter from Fortescue, urging her to come down to them, if it were only for a few days, as he thought Julia grew worse and worse; colder and colder to him she certainly did.

"In short," added he, "to own the truth, I suspect that she repents of her engagement to me, and wishes to break it off; and this prospect, which would have agonized me a few weeks ago, is now not very painful to me—for her coldness does tend to chill my love; but nothing else, believe me, Helena, could have done it." "*A quelque chosè malheur est bon,*" says the proverb, and so Lady Helena found it. Here was an opportunity of avoiding going to the ball, without impropriety, and without seeming to do so in deference to her lover's opinion, or out of regard for his feelings; and thus principle

and pride would both be satisfied. Accordingly, she ordered the carriage and post-horses to come round directly, and instead of going to Mrs. Seebright's, where she was expected, as her father had left London early that morning, she wrote that lady a note to desire her to make her apologies to Lord L. and sent another to Lord Restormel to tell him she was gone to Clifton, and should not return to London, being sick of it and gaiety, and then departed for Clifton to clear up, if possible, the strange, mysterious cause which seemed likely to prevent a union very near her heart, or at least to watch over the declining health of the friend most dear to that heart. But I wonder how soon Restormel will follow me? was a question which she frequently asked herself on the journey, and she sometimes bitterly regretted that she had not condescended to ask to see him before she set off. Though her note, announcing her departure from London, at such a moment, conveyed a balm to the wounded feelings of Lord Restormel, he was excessively

hurt and piqued at her not having desired to see him before she went; and resentment of this proof of indifference, as he thought it, made him resolve, with weakness equal to her own, to delay following her to Clifton, much longer than he needed to have done, and strongly against his inclinations, which made him long to see her, and forget, in a fond welcome, the painful manner in which they last parted. But I must now go back to Julia, and describe what had been passing at Clifton. A short time after her arrival, as she was sitting in a shop, a lady in a widow's dress passed the window; on seeing her Julia started up and ran to the door to look after her, she then wrung her hands together, as if in agony, and fainted away. Lady Erpingham, who was present, saw the swoon, but had witnessed nothing else, as she was making purchases, she therefore only attributed Julia's fainting to encreased weakness, and was glad her poor anxious Marcus had not seen it. But from that moment Julia's spirits were more depress

ed than ever; soon after, as she was with Lady Erpingham, Julia looked out of the window and starting back, grasped her companion's arm convulsively and exclaimed—

"See! see! is not that he? quick, tell me, tell me."

"Yes, it is Marcus certainly, and walking with a widow: but, what then? it is only some messmate's widow I dare say; she is not in handsome mourning: dear me! you are going to faint! shall we stop and ask Marcus to come in?"

"Not for the world, and I hope he does not see us." Nor did he, for he was too much engrossed by his companion: from that moment Julia's manner to her lover grew colder and colder.

"Marcus," said his mother to him that day, but not in the presence of Julia, "we saw you walking with a widow lady this morning; who was it? do I know her?"

"No," he replied in a hurried manner,

" she is an old acquaintance of mine, who is come hither to die I fear, but no one you know."

The truth was this:—As Marcus was one day walking in the country by himself, painfully ruminating on Julia's altered manner, and fancying that the lover in Gloucester-place might have alienated her affections from him, he suddenly, on turning into a lane, met the very woman whose avowed and passionate tenderness he was now only too often contrasting with Julia's coldness, namely, Mrs. Tyrawley herself, and in a widow's dress! He started at seeing her, in evident agitation, and would have passed on; but she, apparently overcome by the suddenness of the meeting, and being too ill and weak from her appearance to bear any surprise, would, he saw, fall to the ground, unless he supported her; and catching her in his arms, she lay pale, motionless, and, he believed, insensible on his bosom while kneeling on one knee; he held her there for some mi-

nutes, vainly endeavouring to revive her. Unconsciously his heart was touched, and re-awakened to former feelings, by this proof what deep emotion his unexpected presence excited in this being, so passionately beloved in the first glow of youthful and unblighted hopes; and as he gazed on that perfect form, and that face which not even sickness and insensibility could rob of its loveliness, he could not help pressing the unresisting beauty to his heart, and imprinting once more a kiss upon those beautiful lips which had so often timidly shrunk from the pressure of his. Mrs. Tyrawley at last thought proper to revive, covered with becoming blushes—nay, something like delirious wandering attended her recovery. She called him her own dear Marcus, beloved in misery, in poverty, and despair, and asked him why he had been away so long? Marcus was terrified, for he thought her senses were gone; but her eye gradually lost its wildness, and exchanged it for a look of such touching tenderness, that he

dared not meet it: and having found that she was quite recovered, he would have taken his leave, but she detained him, and reproachingly asked if he could not spare a few moments longer to a dying and once most dear friend, from the society of the fond and youthful Julia? The woman who spoke looked the fond being whom the youthful Julia was not, and a feeling of resentment towards that innocent girl, led him to stay with more willingness than he would have felt but for the words she used, and which applied so. And, alas! he stayed to hear, that ever since he had fled from her with such apparent abhorrence at the Pavilion, Mrs. Tyrawley had been broken-hearted; that the sight of him had rekindled all her former fires—that her husband had suspected the cause of her dejection—had become jealous, and had never forgiven her, and had made her life wretched. That he had died suddenly, leaving, to the surprise of every one, little property; and that having artfully prevailed on her trustees to lend him the

money settled on her, to vest it in a very advantageous purchase, he had never renewed the settlement, and that she was left with only a hundred a year, which remained of her own fortune, to live upon; and that, worn down by various miseries, she was ordered to Clifton, apparently given over by her physicians. It was natural, and, perhaps, excusable, in a man smarting under the chilling return made to his fondness by one woman, to be flattered and attracted by the avowed attachment of another, and that avowal wrung from an apparently broken heart. He therefore now no longer offered to leave her, on the contrary, he consented to walk further into the country; he even owned that he wished Julia had her warmth of heart and tenderness of nature, and the arm that rested within his, was ever and anon pressed against his side; he did not, however, promise to call on her when they parted, but he found out where she usually walked, and scarcely a day passed but they met in that spot, where the manner of

his first love was a direct contrast to that of his second; at last it became necessary to see her, if it was only to complain to her of Julia's coldness—and then, how soothing was the ill-restrained fondness which shone in Lucy's eyes, and lighted up her pale cheek with its accustomed bloom! At sight of Lucy, looking as she did in former days, something of his former feelings returned, and it was not long before Fortescue, though still the engaged lover of Miss Villeroy, was almost on lover's terms with the beautiful, and, as she said, dying, Mrs. Tyrawley; and this beloved being was poor, destitute, forlorn! and jealoúsy of him had induced her husband, in revenge, to contrive to leave her as destitute as he could; and for whom was he going to sacrifice this woman? for one who evidently loved him no longer, and whose wealth would soon enable her to procure another lover, if one was not already procured! so thought, so felt Captain Fortescue, and it was soon visible, therefore, to Julia, that his coldness was

become equal to her own; that he now as much avoided being alone with her as she had avoided being alone with him, and that therefore the crisis of her fate was fast approaching: things were thus circumstanced when Lady Helena came down to Clifton; her quick eye soon discovered that there was as great a change in her brother's manner to Julia, as in her's to him, though even in both she still saw, at times, looks, stolen looks, which seemed to say that their separation was more forced than natural, and that love still lurked at the bottom of each estranged heart—estranged she knew not why—but Lady Helena was soon so uneasy at Lord Restormel's neither writing to her, nor coming to see her, that even her watchful eye slumbered, and she ceased to importune Julia and her brother, as she had hitherto done, to explain the appearances which surprised her; time, however, began to hang less heavy on her hands, for Colonel Netherby, her cousin, arrived at Clifton with Mr. and Mrs. Benson, whom Lady Helena had not seen since their flight to

the blacksmith, though Lord Erpingham had met them in London soon after that event, and had taken care of his niece's interest; but as she then no longer wanted a home, he did not feel it necessary, and he certainly did not deem it desirable to invite them to Laurel Grove. On the arrival of the Bensons at a large villa which they took near Clifton, they gave it out, that they meant to keep a sort of open house, and Colonel Netherby, who danced even too well for a gentleman, was busily employed in collecting at his sister's house all the best quadrille and waltz dancers in the vicinity and at the Wells; and amongst the dancers of the former, Lady Helena shone conspicuous; she had often danced waltzes with Netherby in her own family circles but though he pronounced her to be the best waltzer he ever beheld, and he wished her to shew off in the balls which his sister gave; and though, as she loved him dearly, she loved to oblige him—one thought of her lover made her refuse him decidedly, and feel it no hardship to do so; nothing

else would she willingly refuse Colonel Netherby; she walked with him, rode with him, drove out with him, talked with him in preference to dancing with other men, in short, as they were, and seemed much attached to each other, and Netherby was so handsome and so graceful, that he was the "observed of all observers;" it was not long before the Clifton gossips gave the cousins to each other, declaring that they would be the most beautiful couple in Christendom. One of the cousins would have been very glad to realize this prediction, for Netherby had long secretly loved Lady Helena, and as he had lately had a large fortune left him, which, but for his profligacy, would have been left to his father, he could have aspired to her hand without any presumption, had not that hand been promised to another. But where was this lover? strange neglect! could I have so neglected such a creature as you Helena! he used to say; and Lady Helena, on such occasions, betrayed so much mortified feeling that No-

rah used to tell him to take courage, for if he played his cards well he might win the game yet. Such was the state of affairs when Lord Restormel arrived, and he had flattered himself that if he came upon Lady Helena suddenly, her heart would speak in his favour, and that whatever ill will there had remained between them from his sudden departure in anger from her, and her's from London, would all be forgotten in the first moments of unexpected re-union. But Lady Helena had seen him coming from a stair-case window, which overlooked the road, and had therefore time to compose herself, and still the tumultuous and glad beating of her heart. She therefore met him with a degree of calmness, which he was far from being able to imitate, and he was trying to summon up courage to demand a private interview with her when Colonel Netherby entered, and the sort of familiar fondness with which she received him, and led him up to Lord Restormel, declaring he was one of the beings whom she loved best in

the world, had such a painful effect on his before irritated feelings, that he resolved not to demand the conference he before sought, and that if Lady Helena chose to forget his rights as a lover, he would not remind her of them; in the meanwhile, he determined to watch her conduct to this uncommonly handsome man, who was avowedly so dear to her. In the evening Mr. and Mrs. Benson came, and with them, as usual, a fiddle; and Lady Helena, to complete his disgust, appeared in the dancing costume which Mrs. Benson had invented, and insisted that her set should wear. It was a sort of Swiss corset cut very low in the back, and the petticoat was very short and very scant; in short, the whole dress was contrary to Lord Retormel's opinion of what the dress of a gentlewoman should be on all occasions, and he mourned to see Lady Helena give in to follies and improprieties, to which she ought to have risen superior; but his horror encreased when he saw Captain Netherby and Mr. Benson also, equip themselves in a sort of theatri-

cal Swiss costume, and it was with some difficulty that he forbore to affront the latter when he told him he must adopt the same costume, or his Norah would not admit him into her quadrille set. But he could not help saying—"I own I am surprised at what I see, for I thought I was coming to visit ladies and gentlemen, and I find them turned into opera dancers." This speech was, with sundry embellishments, repeated to Lady Helena, and just as her heart was softening towards her unhappy lover, as she gazed on his fine, manly, though perturbed countenance, and she was longing for a complete reconciliation with him: but this communication closed her heart again, and in revenge, she obeyed the usual summons to the waltz, and allowed her cousin to lead her to the circle. She waltzed her best, but it was without pleasure, for her heart was heavy, as that heart reproached her; when she paused for breath, she looked round, but Lord Restormel was gone! and sick to the very soul, Lady Helena sat down, and

danced no more that evening, for her lover returned not, and her night was as sleepless as his. On rising she resolved to send him a conciliatory note, and was going to write it when Lord Restormel was announced, and her heart lightened of its load. She went down to him and found him alone. His manner was calm, but cold; he said he had brought her a letter from his mother, and that he was happy to say, she was rather better for her arrival at Nice. Aston said he writes for himself I find; at any other time this news and a letter from Lady Restormel would have interested Lady Helena beyond measure; but now the estranged terms she was upon with her lover were uppermost in her mind, and tears were in her eyes.

"Why did you leave us so abruptly," said she, "I have scarcely slept all night on account of it?"

"Why did you waltz? I have not slept all night on account of *that* and other things."

"What harm could there be even in

your rigid eyes in my waltzing with my first cousin, the companion of my childhood ? he is like a brother to me."

" True, and he therefore might be your lover--you might marry him."

" True again, but what is that to the purpose ?"

" Every thing."

" Well ! I see no harm in waltzing with Ernest, and I never waltz even with him except in our own circle."

" Waltzing is waltzing, wherever it is performed, and in my opinion equally indelicate everywhere, especially for a woman under under your circumstances— Lady Helena."

" And pray what are my circumstances ?" said Lady Helena, blushing deeply, then with one of her most bewitching smiles, she said—" I had a lover once, but I really believe I have lost him. Do you know where he is Restormel ?"

" In my heart, Helena," he replied, " if you would deign to seek for him there."

"Well then, we are friends again, are we?" cried she, wiping a tear from her eyes, and no questions asked.

"Friends! lovers I trust."

"Aye, so do I, and I declare I am happier than I have been for many days, and now I can read and attend to dearest Lady Restormel's letter; but first, I have news for you—between you and me, and from you I ought to have no secrets. Lord L. has proposed to me, and I said strawberry-leaves and balls avaunt. I am contented with plain balls; now was not that heroic?"

"Naughty girl! how I pity poor Lord L. Lord Erpingham has much to answer for in not having allowed us to marry long ago."

The next evening Lady Helena walked till a late hour with Lord Restormel, and peace seemed quite restored between them. But the night after Mrs. Benson was to give a grand ball, for which she had invented another costume for her own set, and had invited all who chose to come in a fancy dress.

"Only promise me, said Lord Restormel, that you will not wear that

odious costume you wore the other night, at this ball, Helena."

"I do promise, I shall certainly not wear that."

"Nor any, I hope, it is so operatic;—but, to be sure you will not,

"*Ne gagez pas*," was the reply; and Lord Restormel was hurt, and disappointed. However, Lady Helena tried to prevail on Norah to excuse her coming in costume, but as she was so weak as to shrink from the charge of being afraid of her lover, and dreading to lose him, she resolved to wear it, at all risks, and prove that she was not the slave her cousins thought her. This conference with Norah had given her such a jaundiced view of every thing, that she fancied Lady Restormel's kind letter, which had at first delighted her, was dictatorial, and she resolved that her lover should, himself, obey, and not expect obedience from her to his whims, or she would never marry him, even though she loved him ever so much. Lady Helena sat down to dinner in her morning dress, and Lord Restormel

tried to be cheerful; and while he looked in her face to forget her faults, at the usual hour for going to a ball, Lady Helena sent word down, that she begged the gentlemen to go in the first carriage, and that she would follow with her mother. Julia was gone to bed more than usually ill, but she insisted on Lady Helena's leaving her, and would not allow the Countess to give up chaperoning her daughter. Fortescue, having paid his accustomed visit to Mrs. Tyrawley, was returned, and accompanied the gentlemen; all but Captain Netherby, who stayed to escort the ladies at, as he said, Lady Helena's particular request, and Lord Restormel was too proud to intrude himself where he might not be welcome, he, therefore, went in the first coach. Lady Helena, meanwhile, was busily employed in heightening every excelling beauty which nature had so lavishly bestowed on her, by all that art and the most skilful coquetry could suggest; and the charms of her person were displayed to the

utmost advantage, even at some expense to her delicacy ; and why did Lady Helena do this ? from the hope of fascinating Lord Restormel, and subjugating his senses in spite of his reason and his will : she had heard, she had read of the sovereign, the resistless power of attractive beauty, but she had never yet seen its empire in her own case, for Lord Restormel seemed always to have the use of his judgment and power over his heart, even in his fondest moments, and never to love so impassioned as to blind him for an instant to any error in conduct or sentiment to which she happened to yield ; and this was the devoted and wild homage which Lady Helena sighed for, therefore her lover's adorating mortified her, even when it was at its height. Infatuated girl ! and what would be the admiration and the devotion which she now, therefore, was endeavouring to excite in this noble heart, even if she succeeded in exciting it ? feelings and emotions which the most unprincipled and despicable of the sex, if possessed of consummate beauty, and

displaying meretricious attraction, might equally, perhaps, succeed in inspiring as her spotless, virtuous self. But Lady Helena would have started to hear, what she might with justice have been told, that she herself had in a measure ceased to be virtuous when she wished to inspire in her lover a passion superior to his sense of propriety, and his value for the decorous graces and attire of a modest gentlewoman. But vanity, and the taunts, flatteries, and insinuations of Norah and her brother, had turned her head, as the common expression is, and she was resolved to touch and humble Lord Restormel's heart, through his senses, and bring him bound and obedient to her feet. Perhaps, thought she, I can even prevail on him to waltz with me! then surveying herself, for the last time, in her glittering and captivating costume, with almost agitated pleasure, she descended full of joyful expectation to the drawing-room, received with affectionate delight the praises of her mother on her appearance, tried not to heed the gentle

hints which that mother gave, at the same time that she feared her person was too much exposed, and then bounded into the carriage, going to exhibit in her appearance, to the nicely judging eyes of Lord Restormel, not the dignified daughter of a noble house—the modest virgin, whom he hoped to change into the equally modest wife—the intellectual companion of his dearest hours, and the gifted mother of his chiidren, but a being whose dress and appearance seemed to qualify her to dance in voluptuous graces before a sultan in his seraglio! However displeased Lord Restormel was with Lady Helena, he was restless and impatient till she appeared, and was watching for her entrance; but, notwithstanding, something had diverted his eyes from the door at the moment when she did enter, leaning on the arm of her cousin, whose costume answered hers, but the buz of universal admiration which the graceful couple excited caused him to turn quickly and anxiously round. He did turn, and he beheld Lady Helena! he gazed on her

fixedly, for one short moment, then sighed deeply, turned abruptly away, and retreated to the farthest part of the room, without even giving her a look, or bow of recognition! Lady Helena was disappointed, piqued, mortified; she expected that he would eagerly have approached her, and by his impassioned looks, if not his words, have told her how much he felt the radiance of her beauty, and how eager he was to claim her promise to dance the first dance with him; but she felt, at once, that she had failed, and for ever, in the attempt for which she had been so zealously preparing; she saw her lover was more susceptible of moral disgust, than of female captivation, and she retreated to the seat near her, vexed, provoked, and almost abashed and repentant.

The ball began with a country dance, to which Lady Helena saw, with astonishment, that Mrs. Benson was led by the Marquis of L., whose presence was most unexpected to her, and unwelcome to Norah herself, as she wished her brother

to profit by what she foresaw would happen—a rupture between Lord Restormel and Lady Helena; and not the marquis but Lord L., who had not yet given up his pursuits of Lady Helena, had come down to Clifton on purpose to attend this ball, knowing that a friend of his, who resided near, would gladly introduce him.

Lady Helena's rank required her to stand next her cousin in this dance, but she was obliged to keep her seat, and let her place be occupied. The dance began without her, for Lord Restormel came not to claim her hand.

"Helena! why do you not join the dance?" said Fortescue.

"Because Lord Restormel does not come to lead me to it."

"Where is he? I will go and seek him. Restormel," said he, when he found him, leaning against a pillar, and his eyes half hidden by his hand, "what ails you? Is that an attitude for a ball-room? Helena is expecting you to lead her to the dance."

"Indeed!" he replied, in a tone of bitterness: "where is she? I do not see Lady Helena Fortescue!"

"Then you are blind; why, there she is!"

"What she!" that *prima donna* of a ballet? that Lady Helena Fortescue, the daughter of a noble race, of whom it may be said that, all the men were brave, and all the daughters virtuous?"

A blush of indignation came over the cheek of Fortescue, at the beginning of this severe observation; but it changed to one full of kinder feeling towards his friend at the end of his speech, and casting an enquiring look over his sister, he exclaimed—"You are right, quite right, Restormel, and Helena has disgraced herself."

"Hold!" said the latter, "make my excuses to your sister, and tell her I resign the honour of dancing with her, this evening, to a partner more suited to her."

"I will tell her, depend on it," he replied, hastening to Lady Henlena: he

then whispered in her ear, " Helena, Helena! Restormel declines dancing with you this evening. He is ashamed to dance with you in that indecent opera dance-like dress. I wonder you are not ashamed to wear it. You and Netherby are only fit to dance together! What fools you have made of yourselves! Shame on your dresses!"

" I wonder you are not ashamed of your conduct, Captain Fortescue; look at home, before you censure me," she angrily and bitterly replied. " Hark ye, brother! Mrs. Tyrawley is at Clifton, and you visit her every day, stern moralist!"

Fortescue was thunderstruck, and silenced, while Lady Helena added, " If Lord Restormel will not condescend to dance with me, Netherby will. Here, Ernest, lead me to the dance."

The delighted Netherby gladly obeyed the summons. Lady Helena laughed, flirted, was brilliant! but her heart was sad, her feelings wounded. The first dance was succeeded by a quadrille, and that by

a waltz. At first Lady Helena was resolved not to join in the latter, not only because she did not wish further to alienate Lord Restormel, but because she never yet had waltzed, except in private family parties. But, alas! the set now waltzing was not Mrs. Benson's chosen set; it was one of a more mixed description, and composed of persons who were not skilful in the art; and their want of grace in the slow waltz, and of lightness in the *sauteuse* were quite unbearable to the correct taste of Norah and her brother, and not only they, but Lady Helena's own vanity whispered.—"Helena, shew these awkward creatures what good waltzing is."

But still she hesitated, when Lord Restormel passed her without speaking, and looking on her with no complacent expression, went into another room. That was decisive; he had now openly thrown down the signal of hostility, and she was determined to take it up.

"Yes, I will waltz," said she, to the

secretly exultingly Netherby, and he led her to the set. It certainly was the perfection of the art of waltzing, and the consummate beauty as well as grace of the waltzers attracted the attention and elicited the admiration of all who gazed on them. Even the couples who had at first revolved with them in the circle, stood still, at last, to admire what every one else did; when Lord Restormel, restless and unhappy, came into the dancing-room, he saw Lady Helena's cheek flushed with gratified vanity, and her beautiful eye downcast, as if wishing to hide what she felt, gracefully leaning against the encircling arm of the evidently enraptured Netherby, and her hand grasped in his as they flew or glided round the room in quick or slow revolutions. At that moment Lord Restormel experienced that most terrible of all sensations, the fancied hate of love; yes, at that moment he fancied that he hated that Helena, so long adored. But whatever was the feeling of his bosom, it gave him calmness, and taught him self-

control; and while he stood at the door, Lady Helena, tired with her exertions, was led past by him, by her lover. He made way for her, and forcing a smile, said, "I think you must be tired."

Lady Helena, agreeably surprised, yet fluttered at his speaking to her, replied, she knew not what.

"Tired of giving pleasure, my lord," said Netherby, "oh, no, Helena cannot be that, and I think you will own you never saw such waltzing before."

"Really, sir," said Lord Restormel, coldly, "I did not look at it, I was busily engaged in looking at that modest, innocent-looking girl, in slight mourning, who is sitting yonder by her mother, I conclude; who is she, Lady Helena, I must know, she is very pretty and interesting." This was said so naturally, and as if without any intention to pique her self-love, that Lady Helena was surprised and alarmed; she would have preferred the bitterest sarcasm, the severest reproof; and she could not conceal her mortifi-

cation, for she replied hastily, "Yes, she is pretty, and I dare say your lordship wished to add to your eulogy, and she never waltzes."

"I dare say her mother, who looks very discreet, would not allow her."

"Nay, my lord, my mother is equally discreet, no implied censure of her I desire, she hates waltzing, I assure you."

For a moment Lord Restormel looked at Lady Helena, and kindly, as she defended her mother at her own expense, but it was only for a moment. "And yet you waltz," was the severe reply.

Lady Helena only bowed her acquiescence.

"If you bear this, you will bear any thing," whispered Netherby; "let us sit down, if I stay I must quarrel with him."

"Stop! your ladyship has not answered my question," said Lord Restormel, observing her perturbation; "who is that sweet creature?"

"She is an heiress, my lord, and daughter of Lady Dalberry, the lady sitting beside her."

"Lady Dalberry, oh! I must get presented directly," he exclaimed, looking pleased for the first time that evening; "her son, who is in India, was my dear friend both at school and college; but why not go and introduce myself?" He then hastily brushed past Lady Helena, and she saw him with a grace, peculiarly his own, give himself the introduction which he sought; she also saw the blushing joy which glowed in the face of both the mother and daughter as he spoke, and the affectionate pressure with which he grasped the hands tendered to him with flattering readiness. Lady Helena felt a pang at her heart unknown before, but she forced herself to rise superior to such weakness, and just then Lord L. came up to her, and earnestly intreated that he might enjoy the honor and happiness, hitherto so cruelly denied, of waltzing with her. Certainly, was now the hasty and desperate reply, and he led her to the set.

Lord Restormel, though charmed with his new acquaintances, was not unmindful of Lady Helena's movements, and he

beheld her on the arm, and then in the arms of Lord L., of him an avowed lover too, with a feeling which no words can describe. This is decisive! here ends our engagement, and I believe I really hate her now! For the rest of the evening he had no eyes or ears but for Lady Dalberry and her daughter. The latter, though he asked her to dance, had no opportunity of dancing with him, as she was too timid, her mother said, to dance quadrilles, and no more country dances were allowed. "But, indeed, my lord," said the artless girl, "I had much rather sit still, and talk with you about our dear Philip."

With what a kind, approving glance Lord Restormel now beheld her. Lady Dalberry saw it, and was delighted. Lady Helena saw it also, while pausing to take breath, and certainly she was not delighted; but impelled her on again, in her course and she ceased not till she could stand no longer. When supper was announced late, Lord Restormel, with Lady Dalberry on one arm, her daughter on the other,

walked close behind her and the marquis, without noticing her, into the supper-room, then seated himself between his companions.

"How entirely Lord Restormel neglects you and me, Helena," whispered the countess, as the ladies left the table. "Have you quarrelled? I hope not, but he could not approve your waltzing any more than myself."

"If you desire me to waltz no more, I will obey you, mamma;" she replied.

"And him too, I hope, for his objecting is a proof of love, Helena."

Lady Helena sighed, and was silent. The gentlemen did not sit long, and while Lady Helena, chilly, sad, self-reproving and absent, was lounging on a seat, her whole person wrapped up in a large black India shawl, Lord Restormel entered, followed by other gentlemen, with shawls on his arm. As he passed Lady Helena, he smiled, and said—

"I am glad to see you so properly clothed, the night is chilly."

He then went in search of Lady Dalberry and her daughter, and soon returned with them equipped for departing.

"Are you going, Restormel?" said Fortescue.

"Yes; I am going to conduct these ladies to their carriage, and shall return no more. I am no dancer you know."

"You breakfast with us to-morrow, I conclude?"

"No, I am to have the honour of breakfasting with Lady Dalberry, and then—"

Here his voice faltered; he said no more, for he had not courage to say, "and then I return for London."

Lady Helena overheard the conversation with a sickness at her heart, which made every object swim around her, and now she haughtily threw aside "the proper clothing" which Lord Restormel had presumed to command, and then she fondly wrapped it round her because he had commended it. But whatever feeling predominated, the pleasure of the evening

was gone, nor could she be prevailed upon to waltz or dance again ; but she, too, retired earlier than the rest of the party did, and pronouncing, in her inmost soul, that the ball had been to her, on the whole, spite of the general admiration she had excited, all " vanity and vexation of spirit."

CHAP. XXII.

To Lord Restormel, that evening had been the destroyer of every prospect most dear to his heart; for to think of marrying Lady Helena, after she had given such convincing proofs how little she valued his opinion, or considered his feelings, was impossible, and he determined, as the house was up, to quit England directly, and join his mother at Nice. With this determination he went to bed, and fell into a perturbed sleep, from which he very soon awoke. And oh! what a change had that sleep made in his feelings! There irritation had subsided, and in his dreams he had beheld Lady Helena as in the happiest days of their courtship. The sight had softened his heart towards her, and while he reflected on his own conduct of the preceding evening, he could not help suspecting that he had treated her with un-

becoming neglect, and that her conduct might in some measure be prompted by a wish to retaliate; he therefore determined to write a conciliating note to her, and if she answered it, and answered it kindly, he would hasten to her, and endeavour to heal the breach which their respective folly had occasioned. He then fell asleep again, but the noise in the hotel, as well as the anxiety of his mind, did not allow him to sleep long, and he rose to write to Lady Helena. Many notes were written and torn, but by the time that he was to go to Lady Dalberry's lodgings, he had pretty well satisfied himself; but as he had sent his own man to Bath on business, he was obliged to send the note by one of the waiters, charging him to go with it immediately, and deliver it to Lady Helena Fortescue's own maid. The man promised obedience, and he set off for Lady Dalberry's. But no sooner was he gone, than the waiter gave the note to another waiter to deliver, who went to a public-house in his way, who in his cups threw

the letter by mistake into the fire, and had only just sense enough left to go back to his employer and tell him what he had done. The waiter, conscious of having neglected his duty, and unwilling to lose the money which he was sure of receiving from Lord Restormel if he concealed what had happened, resolved to do so. Lord Restormel left his new friends as early as he could do so with civility, and returned to his inn to enquire for an answer to his letter, but none had arrived; and as he had said in it that if he did not receive an answer in a few hours he should conclude that Lady Helena intended that all should be at an end between them, he was not a little distressed when he found no answer had arrived. Two more long hours passed, and still no answer; he then desired to see the waiter, and the usual questions took place.

"But are you sure you carried the letter yourself?"

"Quite sure."

"And that you saw Lady Helena's own maid and gave it to her?"

"Quite sure, my lord."

"Then you know her?"

"Perfectly, your lordship; a tallish, thin, tight-laced, light-eyed woman, and has a bent finger."

"The same; I see you know her—you may go."

There could then be no doubt of the safe delivery of the letter! but he would wait till evening. For some time he wondered that he had not received a visit from Fortescue, but he, at last, recollected that he was to go out that day with Mr. Benson and Netherby to look at an estate which had been offered to the latter; still he wondered that Lady Erpingham had not sent to invite him to dinner, but how could she if Lady Helena had resolved to break with him entirely. Thus passed away several miserable hours, day closed in, and night came, and no letter from Lady Helena! perhaps she was ill, too ill to write; he, therefore, inquired if Lady Helena Fortescue and Miss Villeroy had been past that day.

"Lady Helena, sir, but not Miss Villeroy; Lady Helena went past about three o'clock, my lord, and on horseback, with a gentleman and a lady attending her, the Honourable Mrs. Benson, I believe, and then the Marquis of L."

Then, that hope had failed, and he went to bed endeavouring to repay scorn with scorn, and again believing that he ought to hate, and did hate Lady Helena. In the morning, though his night was sleepless, it was comparatively quiet, for his mind was made up, and one of the worst of all states is a state of indecision. After breakfast he delayed still to write his final farewell; but no letter arrived, and he hesitated no longer; he then ordered horses to his carriage, and in a state of feeling which he could not exactly define to himself, he set off on his return to London. His letter was as follows:—

"All is then decided, and we meet no more! I am going off to Nice directly; and as every tie is now broken which bound me to England—broken, I beg leave to add, with the fullest approbation of my

judgment, I shall not return till duty, or painful necessity obliges me to do so. Farewell! I earnestly wish you every possible happiness with a husband more suited to you than I am.

"I am, your ladyship's

"obedient humble servant,

"RESTORMEL."

The waiter took care to deliver this letter in person, therefore the important letter, the one on which the happiness of two persons depended was not delivered, and that calculated to ensure to them hours of sorrow, was delivered only too punctually!—on what slight incidents sometimes depends the happiness or misery of a life. Lady Helena had stayed at home the whole of the morning after the ball, till three o'clock, expecting to hear from or see Lord Restormel! but as he neither came nor sent, and she was ashamed of owning why she stayed within, she was prevailed upon to take a ride as she had a very bad head-ache, the result of heart-ache and a sleepless night. She returned, hoping to find that Lord Restormel had

called during her absence, and was painfully disappointed ; but, the next morning, before she had quitted her room, the fatal, final note was put into her hands, and as there was no allusion in it to his first letter, Lady Helena could only think this was all which his heart had dictated, and that he was indeed lost to her and her hopes for ever ! It was well for her that she was alone, for she gave way to such a delirium of hopeless agony, when she found that her folly had broken a tie so dear, on reflection to all her best and tenderest feelings, as she would not on any consideration have had beheld by any earthly being ; it was only by deep and humble supplication to that heaveny Being, whom in the thoughtless gaiety and pride of her heart, she had but too much forgotten, that she could obtain strength to support this overwhelming blow, or to bear the affectionate regrets of her mother and Julia, when she gave Lord Restormel's farewell into their hands.

" However," said the countess, " I am

sure all is for the best, and you both have done wisely, for I dare say you would not have been happy together."

"Lady Helen sighed and shook her head; for, with her conduct, she was very sure that wisdom had nothing to do, and that it was all on Lord Restormel's side. But, alas! cried she, "how well does his dear mother know him. How truly did she say that I should find him less indulgent than herself!" As soon as Lord Restormel reached London, he wrote as follows to Lord Erpingham:—

"My Dear Lord,

"Truly sorry am I to be obliged to inform you, that circumstances have led Lady Helena and myself to consider ourselves as betrothed lovers no longer; like a truly honourable woman, she convinced me that such was her wish, as soon as it was known to herself, and for this ingenuousness, I cordially thank her.

"I am, my dear lord,

"Your's, most truly,

"Restormel."

"P.S.—You will be sorry to hear that, by to-day's post, I learn that my mother is worse—I am, therefore, going off for Dover instantly."

Having dispatched this letter, he hastened his preparations for his departure, and with a desperate calmness of feeling, which looked like indifference, he began his melancholy journey—a journey, at the end of which he could look forward with nothing but dismay,—as the misery of seeing the only being expire whom he now most loved on earth, in all probability, too certainly awaited him! But Lord Restormel was a believer, and the reliance of the Christian enabled him to support the sorrows of the man. Those who are actively and habitually benevolent, have this marked advantage amongst others over the rest of their species in times of affliction, and that is, a power of forgetting themselves in the joys or sorrows of those whom they love, and of going out of themselves to rejoice or mourn with them. This truth was made manifest

in Lady Helena's experience; her habitual and active benevolence was, luckily for her, called to powerful and necessary exertion, by the situation of the close, reserved, and suffering Julia.

Marcus returned from his short tour on the evening of the day on which Lord Restormel departed; but he left the family party very early, and went to Clifton, where he lodged, on pretence of having a bad head-ache. The news of the rupture between his friend and his sister did certainly not tend to raise his spirits, and he was so out of humour with all the world, because not satisfied with himself, that he was almost sorry Lady Helena's self-blame deprived him of all excuse to follow Lord Restormel, and demand satisfaction for her injuries. But he did not venture to echo Lady Helena's severe censure of herself; he dared not, lest she should retaliate as she had done before; and he shrunk from the severity which he could not but feel that he merited. But, before his departure, Julia, so full of emotion,

that she would have appeared calm and indifferent, except to the quick-sighted eye of anxious and observant friendship or love, timidly approached him, and said, in a low voice—" Captain Fortescue, I wish you would come hither before the breakfast hour to-morrow, as I wish to speak to you alone."

" Can you not speak to me now ?" said he, hastily, and turning very pale.

" No, not now; I am not well enough; good night! God bless you!" she replied, hastily withdrawing herself from his detaining hand. But, why did he detain her with that fond and earnest grasp ? There is no accounting for the caprices of feeling; for he whose heart at the moment beat tenderly at sound of that faltering voice and those beautiful though averted eyes, was in a few moments more in the presence of her rival, and enjoying the unrestrained fondness of her well-acted welcome.

" Julia! what is the matter with you to-night?" cried Lady Helena, whom no cares of her own could long render un-

mindful of others? "You are more than usually depressed and agitated! How cruel! how very cruel is this reserve! and to me too, who have no reserves to you, but tell you all my secrets and my weaknesses."

"Have patience with me—I shall be better to morrow! much better; and then —yes; one day, perhaps, you shall know all. But good night now; I think if I go to bed I shall sleep."

"As she spoke, her feet tottered; she fell into Lady Helena's arms, and was carried to bed too weak even to sit up for a moment, but perfectly conscious to all that was passing. Lady Helena and the countess were so much alarmed, that they sent for their physician, who, as usual, declared that Julia's disorder was wholly on the spirits, and that her present state proceeded from nervous weakness."

"Be that as it may," said Lady Helena when he was gone, "I will not leave the dear girl to-night." Nor did she leave her

till, at day break, she had read her into a tranquil slumber.

"She suffers," said Lady Helena to herself, "and the worst of all pangs, those of jealousy; but still she is enviable, she has not, like me, brought her sufferings on herself, but is afflicted through the faults of others. Oh, Julia, how I envy you!" The next day, though Marcus was true to her appointment, Julia was not, for she slept beyond the appointed hour. However, when she awoke she insisted on rising, and Lady Helena allowed her to do so.

"Now, then," said Julia, "tell Captain Fortescue that I wish to see him in the dining-parlour." Lady Helena delivered the message, led the trembling girl to the place of meeting, and left her alone with her brother. It was some minutes before Julia, whose tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of her mouth, could articulate what she came to speak. But, as if a power superior to herself enabled her to perform her painful task, she was at length able to

say----" Is it, indeed, true, Captain Fortescue, not only that Mrs. Tyrawley is at Clifton, but that you visit her every day ?"

" Who could tell you this ? did Helena ?"

" Oh ! no, she was too kind to do so---- no matter who told me ; but, is it a fact or not ?"

" It is a fact, for your coldness during such a length of time, has really so chilled my affection, and so convinced me that your's for me is——"

" It is enough," replied Julia, coldly and proudly interrupting him, " I have now heard what I wished to hear, and in reply, I beg leave to say, that you must henceforth consider our engagement as at an end for ever. I resign my claims to you, and earnestly, heartily wish you to be happy with Mrs. Tyrawley !" She then left the room before Fortescue could recover his surprise, and I may add, the shock of what she said. Then he was free ! and at liberty to marry Mrs. Tyrawley ; he had lately sometimes wished to be

so. Then, now that he was so, why did he not feel happy and elated? was it that Julia was really dearer to his heart than the woman he had first loved! He feared to analyze his feelings, for should he find that he loved Julia best, he must humbly sue to be received again into favour, and again at that his pride at present rebelled. Lady Helena now hastily ran into the room, exclaiming----" Do tell me, Marcus, what has passed between you and Julia? She fainted away as soon as she left you, and is only now recovering."

" But she is recovering?"

" Yes."

" Then tell her I beg, I entreat to see her again," he replied, with great and glad emotion, for he believed that she resigned him merely through woman's pique and jealousy, and that she would repent and forgive him. But he solicited an interview in vain.

" Helena," said Julia, firmly and calmly, " this swoon will be the last proof of weakness, which on this subject you will

ever see in me. Tell Captain Fortescue that I have not lightly and inconsiderately resigned him, but from a deep conviction that I should be miserable if I married him, for I should have no confidence in his affection."

"Resigned him! have you resigned him? oh! poor, lost Marcus! then he will be Mrs. Tyrawley's!"

"To be sure he will, I have given him to her. I have wished him happy with her, and from my heart."

"Oh! Julia! what have you done?" cried Lady Helena, bursting into tears; "you have made me more wretched than I was, and that was needless, and you have enabled Marcus to break all our hearts and his own too, if he marries that woman!" But Julia remained firm, and Lady Helena was forced to go to Marcus, and relate all she had said.

"It is enough," replied he, proudly, "I will condescend to supplicate no woman. I am glad she knows her own mind at last, and I know mine!—good morning!"

Lady Helena would fain have detained him to remonstrate with him, but he would not listen to her, and he left the house in excessive anger and perturbation, and also wondering how Julia could have been so well informed of his movements. He instantly repaired to Mrs. Tyrawley, who gave way to a violent expression of delight, which she modestly pretended to check, when she heard that his engagement was at an end."

"Oh, Marcus," cried she, fondly leaning on his shoulder; "then I shall at least be spared the agonizing pang of envy, and you will not be another's."

He could not, as she expected he would say, "No, and I will be your's!" for the time was not yet come, nor would it ever, she feared, unless she contrived to hasten it. Accordingly she told him now what she said she would never have told him if this rupture had not happened, namely, that Julia was said to have long repented her engagement to him, as she had conceived an attachment to a very

charming man, a relation of Lady Villeroy's; and as she saw that Fortescue writhed under this intelligence, exclaiming, when she had ended, "I believe it, I believe it, on my soul!" She went on to invent a number of corroborative circumstances, which maddened him so much, that, spite of her blandishments, he rushed from the house, meaning to go and reproach the innocent Julia; but he thought better of it, and returned to his own apartments to compose his mind, and soothe his irritated feelings.

The next day pride was the predominant sensation, and he tried to feel happy in the recovered power of marrying the first idol of his youthful heart, and rendering her happy, while with pleased alacrity he repaired to her lodgings. But she was too ill to see him; a note from her, however, was given him in which she said, that his cruelty in leaving her as he did had brought on all her worst symptoms, and she could not see him then; but if she

grew worse she hoped he would allow her the happiness of dying in his arms.

Terrible was the day which Fortescue passed after reading this note—Julia false, and Lucy dying!—He mounted his horse instantly and rode about the country all the day like a madman, only returning every hour to Clifton to enquire how Lucy did.

The next day she owned herself better, and dressed in most becoming night-clothes, received his visit, in the presence of her maid, in her bed. She told him that she felt she had not long to live, and was thankful that what remained to her of life would be spent with him, for she said, she disregarded the cruel reports to which their renewed intimacy had given rise, and thought his presence was a full equivalent for loss of reputation, as she knew her own innocence.

Fortescue's generous nature was shocked to find that her fame was injured by his visits, and he found that he must

in justice and in honor save her reputation, even against her will, and not take advantage of the blindness which the intoxication of love threw over her eyes to indulge himself in an intercourse which was, in the eyes of the world, injurious to her. He must, therefore, he saw, cease to visit her, or make her his wife.

It is easy to conclude which alternative he preferred; her beauty, her softness, her passionate attachment to himself, together with the pity which her ill health, endangered life, and destitute situation excited, made him resolve to marry her. But as soon as he had offered, and been accepted, he left Clifton for the house of a friend near Reading, determined not to return thither till he came to receive the hand of Lucy, as he wished to avoid seeing any of his family, since he knew that he could without much pain defy their letters of expostulation and entreaty, but not their personal solicitations, not to marry Mrs. Tyrawley. He did not, however, make

known his intention to marry her till the day was fixed.

He then wrote to his father, who was visiting a dying friend in Suffolk, and to Lady Helena, to desire her to break his intentions to his mother. To Julia he also wrote, telling her he did not mean to upbraid with her falsehood, an the contrary, he wished to bless it, as it had enabled him to do justice to the only woman who ever truly and faithfully loved him, and that he thanked her for having resigned him when she did. As Julia expected this event, she was tolerably well prepared for it, and the now recovered calmness of her manner was not at all disturbed. Not so Lady Helena and her mother! they suffered dreadfully, but at length, after writing repeated letters, and making fruitless attempts to see Fortescue, they were obliged to submit quietly to this painful stroke, especially as the earl, who had more power over his son than any one, was unable to leave his friend, and try to expostulate with him in person.

"Yet after all, what could we say, and why should we object?" said the countess at last: "Marcus is convinced Mrs. Tyrawley is a virtuous woman, or he would not marry her. The world is very scandalous, therefore she may always have been virtuous, especially as she has always loved Marcus you hear, and such an attachment is a great shield to the honour of a woman."

"She says she always loved Marcus!" said Lady Helena.

"Well, my dear child, and why should we not believe her? She may be, after all, a very respectable woman, nay, I dare say she is a very respectable woman, and, with your father's approbation, I shall receive her as soon as she is the wife of my son."

Lady Helena smiled mournfully at her mother's consistency of feeling and character, and went in search of Julia, to whom she imparted what had passed, and who instantly saw, that as she must not expose herself to association with Fortescue till

she had conquered her attachment to him, she must choose a guardian and another residence as soon as possible, till she had an opportunity of joining Lord and Lady Aston abroad. Julia answered Fortescue's letter the day after she received it, and the misery which she endured while writing it, convinced her that her peace of mind could only be restored by an entire cessation of intercourse between them. It was with an anxious heart that Fortescue expected, and with a beating one that he opened, the letter of Julia, which, by some accident, he did not receive till on the eve of his wedding-day, and when he was trying to recal those feelings of ardent love which he had once felt towards Mrs. Tyrawley, and which he expected to feel, whenever he should lead her to the altar. But it was impossible, she was no longer the woman he once adored. She had been the property of another man, she had—no matter what the motive was—sold herself as it were for wealth, and he also knew that the breath of scandal had not spared

her fame. Nay, was her conduct towards himself absolutely correct? Ought she to have received his visits as she did, when she knew him to be the engaged lover of another? But then, he remembered, on the other hand, her beauty, her attractions, and her tenderness, and he at last worked himself up to believe that he should feel more like an impatient lover the next day, especially as she loved him, and Julia did not. But Julia's letter caused another revulsion of feeling, for she wrote thus:—"I know not what you mean by my 'falsehood,' as you must know my 'falsehood,' as you call it, was only the result of yours, and with yours I have been long, very long acquainted, though I dared not tell you, for reasons which even now I cannot give. But believe me, I never blamed, I only pitied you, for I know, by my own feelings, the resistless and unalterable power of a first and early attachment; I therefore readily understood and felt for your's. I felt that I could never love any other man than yourself, even if

time, absence, and, above all, supplication to the power who has afflicted me, should enable me to rise superior to my love for you. But should they not, I trust that I shall not live long, for now I have lost you, what have I to live for? No, dear Fortescue, as I venture to call you for the last time, not even the happy woman for whom I am forsaken, loves you better, or more faithfully than I do. But I almost blush to own this, as you will so soon be the husband of another! Yet I cannot endure that you should accuse me, or think me guilty of falsehood. I wonder that I can bear to write this; but see, a tear has nearly blotted out the words 'husband of another!' How weakly I delay to bid you adieu! and sign myself to you, for the last time, and with the truest wishes for your happiness,

your affectionate

JULIA VILLEROY.

It was with sensations almost amounting to frenzy, that Fortescue read this. Julia still loving him and never having

ceased to love him; Julia never able, probably, to conquer her attachment! what then could make her so strangely cold to him? and what could she mean by having long been aware of his falsehood? his falsehood had been of a very recent date; was it possible that treachery had been at work to separate them? but who could have a motive to do so? who was the man that made love to Julia? and could Lucy? but it was wicked to suspect her, and the lover was the person who had done the mischief if any was done: but how could he know? how enquire? it was too late to demand an audience of Julia, and he must now keep the promise he had made and marry Lucy: he could not, however, but think he had been too precipitate; then the next moment, with something of Lady Helena's generosity, he comforted himself with the idea that he should derive happiness from making another happy, and that, in the faithful tenderness of his wife, he should lose all regret for the loss of the affectionate but mysterious Julia. The

next day, notwithstanding, rose only too soon for Fortescue, and he almost trembled when he recollected, what solemn and binding vows he was about to make—vows certainly destructive to the peace of one beloved being—vows hateful to his parents and his sister, and if he were weak enough to mind forebodings, vows as likely to ensure his own misery, as his own happiness. But it was too late to go back, he therefore dressed, ordered his horse to come round, and was preparing to go and conduct his bride to church, when a man, whose horse was covered with foam, rode up to the house at full gallop. Fortescue's friend, who was to have accompanied him to the altar, though he disapproved of his choice, came instantly running up to him, with a small parcel in his hand, on which was written, 'For Captain Fortescue, to be delivered and opened immediately; and to be sent to him wherever he is.' Fortescue eagerly broke the seal, and beheld with sensations, impossible to describe, the astonishing contents. But I must now take as

brief a review as I can of what had been passing in Gloucester Place, at the house of Lady Villeroy: Aubrey, the relation, and intended husband of the infatuated Lady Villeroy, was the man so long adored by the equally infatuated Mrs. Tyrawley: he was and he always had been the arbiter of her fate; she had loved him, and him only, from the first dawn of her youth, and though with a passion unreturned, except by avowed scorn and contempt for her weakness, she had continued to love him, as I have before stated; she had, in early youth, sacrificed nearly all her little fortune to pay his debts, and had contracted debts herself for him, and it was jealousy of him, not of Fortescue, which had led her husband to leave her destitute; for they had met Aubrey abroad while he was living there with a mistress, and the devoted Lucy could neither control nor conceal her misery and her jealousy. Mr. Tyrawley died not long before Sir George Villeroy, and just as Aubrey had resigned his frail companion to another, and was awaiting Lady Villeroy's summons

to England, Lucy wrote to tell him she was a widow : his reply was " Well, what then ? I will never marry you, but I advise you to try and regain Fortescue ; I have, by means of my cousin Mansfeldt, who has a mind to the heiress himself, contrived to give Miss Villeroy suspicions of her lover's being still devoted to you, and wishing to marry her only from interested motives, and because he has promised to marry her. I will tell you more when we meet, and remember I am poor and Fortescue rich." It was indeed true that Julia had received anonymous letters, which she was desired to name to no one, because Fortescue would suspect who wrote them, and might endanger his own life and that of the writer, whose only motive was to save Miss Villeroy from a marriage unworthy of her, as he had a great regard for the memory of her angel mother. Had Julia known more of the world, she would, regardless of the pretended consequences, have shewn these letters to Fortescue, or at least to his sister or Sophia ; but her youth and inexperience made her an easy

prey to these designing persons, and the reserve of her nature completed their success. Mansfeldt had deceived Aubrey as to his motives; no persons like to own a base motive when they can assume a good one, and Mansfeldt chose to impute to love the conduct which was, he knew, instigated by hate, as well as by the wish to prevent Fortescue's marriage with a woman who he knew disliked him; nor could Aubrey, however inclined he might be to doubt Mansfeldt's word on some occasions, be slow to believe that he loved a beautiful girl of eighteen, and wished therefore to prevent her marrying a rival. On the death of Sir George Villeroy, the three confederates extended their plans of operations, and as it was soon known in the neighbourhood that Miss Villeroy would want a waiting-maid, they contrived to introduce a tool of their own, who, after Julia's removal from Gloucester Place, was always acquainted with the hour at which an anonymous letter would arrive by the twopenny-post, and was there-

fore in the way to receive it, and convey it unseen by any of the family to Julia, as they well knew that if Lady Helena had seen twopenny-post letters frequently arriving directed to her friend, she would have enquired who her correspondent was. To complete her distrust of Fortescue, Julia was informed that, at such an hour, he would be walking in Dorset Street with a tall lady in weeds, and that that lady would be Mrs. Tyrawley, who was recently become a widow; and as Julia's dressing-closet looked into Dorset Street, she might, with her own eyes, the writer said, convince herself that her anonymous friend told the truth. Accordingly, in his way from his lodgings to Gloucester Place, Fortescue, as usual, went through Dorset Street; when, just before he reached the above-mentioned window, he was accosted by a tall lady in weeds, who told him she was the widow of a lieutenant who had once served under him, and begged to know if he could do any thing for a son of his who wished to enter the service.

Fortescue walked up Dorset Street, consequently listening to this tale, which was told by a woman dressed for the purpose, and he did so in sight of the deceived and wretched Julia; yet further, when Julia was ordered to quit London by the physicians, she was informed that Fortescue would certainly propose that she should go to Clifton, because Mrs. Tyrawley was going thither by order of her physicians, and as Fortescue did urge her to go thither in preference to any other place of the kind, because he had a friend residing in the neighbourhood, her confidence in her anonymous correspondent was fatally confirmed; but, alas! it was strengthened still more when she saw the real Mrs. Tyrawley pass the shop where she was sitting, that is, she saw a tall lady in black, who looked like the one she had seen in London, and the confederates had taken care to employ a woman on that occasion, who in height and figure resembled Mrs. Tyrawley! no wonder, therefore, that the poor Julia was com-

pletely deceived, and that her spirits and her health yielded to the pressure of secret anxious suffering, which she could not, dared not, reveal to any one, especially as her true and generous love made her shrink from exposing the error of Fortescue, even to Sophia. But Aubrey's motives were changed when he beheld and become acquainted with Julia. Before, he had laboured to prevent her union with her lover, merely that his slave, Mrs. Tyrawley, might regain Fortescue to herself, and he, as usual, receive pecuniary aid from her, while Mansfield would have a chance for winning the heiress; but when he saw youth, beauty, purity, and wealth united, in the unsuspecting victim of his arts, a feeling of virtuous attachment, such as he had never experienced before, took possession of his heart: he loathed the golden fetters, which Lady Villeroy, he saw, meant to impose on him, and he resolved to exert on Julia those powers of captivation which he had hitherto found resistless to other women. But, blinded

by vanity, and led by his impetuous passions, he made a premature discovery of his love, and the result I need not repeat: he still persevered, though he in the meanwhile allowed Lady Villeroy to look forward with certainty to be his wife, when the first year of her mourning should expire; and that Mrs. Tyrawley might not be jealous of Julia, he told her if he ever married, he would marry Lady Villeroy. But these wicked conspirers against the peace of innocence, were not allowed to triumph, ultimately, in their wickedness; for Lady Villeroy was enabled to detect and expose them. Aubrey had been for some days so unwell that he was forced to keep his room and have advice. One afternoon, while busy in arranging a cabinet of letters and trinkets, an anodyne, which he had unconsciously taken, operated so powerfully that he fell back in his chair in a deep sleep. At this moment Lady Villeroy entered the room; seeing him in this situation, she started forward to ascertain whether he was in a

swoon or a slumber; and having convinced herself he was only in the latter, she had sat down to watch beside him, when her eye rested on a letter, dated the preceding day, and written in a woman's hand, signed "the fond and faithful Lucy Tyrawley:" she instantly snatched it up, and read with horror and fierce indignation, the following lines:—

"*Clifton.*

"Cruel, arbitrary, but ever most dear and only beloved Aubrey! I have for your sake made a complete dupe of that fond fool Fortescue! That Miss V.'s coldness mortified his vanity, and my ardour gratified it so much, that I should soon be sure of him, I told you before. I have now to tell you that the poor girl, being entirely convinced that our anonymous letters told her the truth months ago, and that Fortescue was bound to her only by honor and avarice, and to me by love, broke with him suddenly, and kindly desired him to marry me. I took advantage of this, when he related it to me, feigned to be near

dying a feint which real illness assisted, and the consequence has been, that the day after to-morrow I shall be his wife! But, oh! I am very wretched! for I hear, no matter from whom, that you love Miss Villeroy! I shall not be very jealous, if you marry that old miserly tigress, Lady Villeroy, though you tell me you loath her, and are only making a fool of her; but, mark me, sir, if you dare to make love to Julia, I will, at all risks to myself, expose you to her in your true colours. Julia your wife!—the idea drives me mad! I earnestly wish you would tie yourself, instantly, (however odious she is to you) to that doting old woman, who is, you say, so nauseously fond of you. Farewell! I must write a tender note to Fortescue, after all, he is a fine, handsome creature! and I wonder I do not love him passionately, perhaps, I shall one day. I wish I could make you jealous! but, oh! he is not, he never can be *you* in my eyes---you, beloved by me from earliest youth! and still the only being, as you well know, whom I

ever did, or ever can love! On you I lavished my little wealth; for you I cheerfully injured my reputation; and with you I would now gladly fly to the end of the world! and what have you uniformly given me in return for this self-devotion? Your cold contempt, barbarian! But I must, to oblige you more than myself, complete my work, and give myself again to another."

It was with great difficulty that Lady Villeroy could contain herself, and forbear to vent her indignation in loud reproaches, while reading this letter; but, cunning, the result of her wish for revenge, and perhaps better feelings, a wish to do justice to Fortescue and Julia, taught her forbearance, and she left the room softly, taking the letter of Lucy with her. This letter, she instantly sent off by an express to Clifton, charging him to find Fortescue, wherever he was, and give the packet into his own hand: a feeling of jealousy unconsciously, perhaps, prompted this resolution; for, if Julia was once Fortescue's, she never would be Aubrey's. She enclosed the letter in the following one.

Sir—" Read the enclosed, and thank heaven and me for your escape, for I trust these will reach you time enough to prevent your marrying that vile woman, and give you back to poor Julia, to whom my love. I send this by an express. Pray pay all charges.

" Your servant,

" Elizabeth Villeroy."

These were the letters delivered to Captain Fortescue on the morning of the day designed for his marriage. There are few feelings of agony in the catalogue of human miseries so bitter, for the moment at least, as the sudden conviction forced with irresistible clearness on the mind, of the utter worthlessness of the object of a long and tender attachment! Fortescue at first reeled and staggered under the blow thus inflicted on him, and felt contempt as great as his once adored Lucy expressed for the fond weakness and baby vanity which had made him her easy dupe. But the next moment his soul seemed almost bursting with gratitude to

heaven for the mercy vouchsafed him! and while he sunk devoutly on his knees, his brave and manly heart was not ashamed to vent its thankfulness in tears, which streamed from his uplifted eye over his clasped hands, and hung upon his quivering lip! That duty over, he desired his servant to pay the express whatever he demanded; and then, throwing himself into the carriage designed to convey him and his bride to the altar, he desired to be driven to Mrs. Tyrawley's lodgings. On the way thither, he remembered, with remorseful tenderness, how often he had complained of Julia's coldness, a coldness now so well accounted for, a coldness which did not as he now found proceed from her heart, and he longed to throw himself at her feet, and renew there every vow of the most ardent love! for in proportion as Lucy fell in his esteem for ever, the injured and virtuous Julia rose with bright and added beauty! Still, spite of his injuries, Fortescue trembled to behold that being once so dear, who would

soon be forced to shrink humbled and abashed before the terror of his reproaching eye. Lucy, herself, was not without her painful feelings; she had her compunctious visitings, and she had also jealous fears that Julia might be induced to love and marry Aubrey, as she believed him capable of winning the affections of any woman. If so, thought she, I shall have deceived the noble Fortescue, only to make myself a greater wretch than ever, for Aubrey will be rich, and rich independent of me and my fond aid! But it was too late to retreat, and pale and ill assured she awaited the arrival of Fortescue! He came, he rapidly mounted the stairs, and forcing a smile, she advanced to meet him, assuming as she did so, an air of timid bashfulness. This artful seeming steeled his heart, and fixing his fine eyes upon her, he said, opening her letter at the same time—"Mrs. Tyrawley, do you know that hand-writing?" She looked, she recognised it, and sunk nearly fainting into a chair; Fortescue rung for assistance, then coldly

said—"I am now going to that injured angel! Farewell! farewell for ever!"

"There is still one comfort!" cried Lucy, after he was gone, "he will be reconciled to Miss Villeroy, and she will never be Aubrey's."

While these events were passing, Lord Erpingham arrived at Clifton, and with a heavy heart—for what awaited him there was not likely to afford comfort to him in any way; as he knew that his son was on the eve of forming a marriage, which he detested, after having, as he feared, endured Miss Villeroy to break her engagement to him; and his daughter had also separated herself from the lover under whose honorable protection he had hoped to see her placed; moreover, he feared that he should on inquiry find the fault of the rupture was more on Lady Helena's side, rather than on Lord Restormel's

"Never, Augustus, did I return to you so reluctantly as now," said the earl, "for never before were my paternal pride and comfort so entirely over-clouded before. I

do not ask you where Marcus is, he is, I doubt not, with that odious woman."

"I hope not odious, my dear lord; I dare say she has been much slandered, and Marcus respects as well as loves her, or he would not marry her."

"Kind and candid as usual," he replied, "but where is Helena? how is she."

"She is at-home, dreading, I believe, to see you, and as usual blaming herself."

"So, so, then it is as I suspected, but let me see her directly." Lady Helena came, and with such a countenance of habitual woe, as her father could not behold unmoved; kissing her pale cheek with affectionate warmth, he gazed earnestly and anxiously in her face, and seating her on his knee, allowed the overcharged heart of his child to unload itself in tears on his shoulder.

"Oh! this is so kind," said the sobbing girl at last! "and I merit only reproaches!"

"I wish to judge for myself," replied

her father kindly, "and I know you 'will a plain, unvarnished tale deliver,' Helena not at all sparing yourself: come, tell me all that has happened." Lady Helena, did so, and Lord Erpingham, who was indeed a just and honorable man, declared that he could not blame Lord Restormel for his severity of reproof to a young woman, who not only wore a costume unbecoming her rank in life, but wholly in opposition to the wishes of her lover, and I doubt not, said he, to those of her mother. His resentment was honorable to himself, but what I doubt is, whether the provocation was sufficient to justify his leaving you as he has done, without sending you any other notice than this cold, heartless note. Had he loved you as a man ought to love the woman he marries, he could not have left you without a more feeling farewell. Alas! little did the earl or Lady Helena think that a letter, a touching letter had been written by Lord Restormel, and just such an one as Lady Helena and her father would both have cordially delighted in, and

which would, had it been received, have rivetted the union which the note had broken! As it was, Lady Helena could not acquit Lord Restormel of want of kind and generous indulgence; and Lord Erpingham decidedly blamed him. "However," said he, "as he is so cold-hearted, and so little disposed to make allowances for the pride and vanity of lovely and admired nineteen, I am glad you are separated, for you would never have been happy together. I declare I wish Julia and he could meet and fall in love with each other, he would be happier with her than with you, and she would be happier with him than with that strange capricious Marcus."

Poor Lady Helena had often said this herself, and she shuddered and turned pale when her father's opinion thus positively confirmed her's; how earnestly did she hope that Lord Restormel and Julia might never be thrown in each other's way! yet, if Julia joined Lord Aston abroad, they would meet in scenes of sorrow calculated to endear them to each other. The idea

was insupportable, and she, even she, the generous and disinterested Lady Helena, could not help wishing that something would occur to prevent an intimacy between Julia and Lord Restormel. While Lady Helena was weeping over the bare possibility of an event so destructive of all her future happiness, for neither Lord L. nor Netherby had for one instant weakened, by their attentions, the power of Lord Restormel over her heart; her footman announced the arrival of Marcus, who instantly followed him to her room.

"You here, Marcus! you here!" she exclaimed, "the bridegroom, I conclude, of Mrs. Tyrawley; do you not know that my father is in the house?"

"I do know it; but I care not. I am no bridegroom, nor ever shall be," he replied in a hurried manner, "except that injured angel—but where is she? I must and will see Julia directly!"

"Impossible; she will refuse to see you! but what has happened?"

"Happened! I have been saved from

destruction, from the snares of that despicable woman, Mrs. Tyrawley!"

"Oh, joyful tidings! well then, I hope Julia will see you, and I will go to her."

She did so; but scarcely had she opened the door when Marcus rushed into the room after her, in a frenzied manner, and threw himself at Julia's feet, and conjured her to listen to him, in order to save him from destruction! He then put Lucy's letter into her hands, and desired her to read it. With what sensations she did so I need not attempt to say, but long and most satisfactory to the heart of Julia, and Fortescue was the explanation that followed; and, as Julia was no longer afraid of exposing the life of Marcus, or of any one, by the disclosure, as his enemies were beneath his resentment, she brought all the wicked letters which had, during so many months, preyed on her peace, and blighted all her prospects; she had preserved them carefully, she said, that they might justify her strange, mysterious coldness when she was no more;

but the agitation even of recovered happiness was too much for her weak frame; and as soon as Lady Helena had prepared her father to receive her brother, Marcus left her to the tender care of his sister. The earl received his son with a cold, resentful manner, for he considered him as culpable in having so entirely set his opinion and wishes at defiance, in engaging to marry Mrs. Tyrawley; he also told him that he should think it his duty as a friend, to advise Julia not to receive him again as a lover, till he had undergone a long probation, especially as the rupture between them, and his being on the eve of marriage with another woman were well known; therefore, an immediate renewal between him and Julia would expose the latter to well deserved censure; and if Julia was wise, he thought she would not even allow him to correspond with her, but would prove his fidelity before she ever trusted him again. Julia, meanwhile, for the same reasons, and this additional one, that she did not feel at all

sure that Mrs. Tyrawley would not, by some means or other, again separate them, had resolved to refuse to accept a renewal of Captain Fortescue's addresses, and even if he left England, to refuse to correspond with him. Fortified in her resolution by the honourable advice of the earl, she, therefore, positively declared that she would neither see him nor correspond with him for twelve months, and should consider herself at liberty to accept the addresses of any other man; but it was so evidently an effort to her to do this, that Marcus hoped he should be able, through the influence of Lady Helena, to prevail on her to see him, or write to him long before that time elapsed, and Marcus set off on a tour to the Highlands, to which was to succeed a tour entirely round Ireland; full of hope, though also full of grief and mortification, but pre-eminent over every other sensation, was that of gratitude to Heaven for his preservation from a fatal marriage, and even of gratitude to its agent, Lady Villeroy.

"But can I inflict no punishment on those wretches?" said Marcus, "the men are beneath my sword, and for using my horsewhip they could indite me for an assault."

"The wisest, as well as the most Christian way," replied the earl, "is to take no revenge, and let the matter die away in silence. Depend on it, some retributive justice attends bad actions here, and you will be revenged, without the guilt of revenging yourself."

"Oh, if this Aubrey marries Lady Villeroy, Marcus, you will be sufficiently revenged on him."

"Nay, Helena! remember the express."

"I do, and that she desired you to pay for it too." This was said with something of her former spirit, but it was only a flash of lightning through a dark cloud, for generally speaking, Lady Helena's countenance and manner bespoke a mind absent, joyless, restless: and the only expression of joy, which ever irradiated her dim eye, was called into it by seeing Julia gradually,

but surely recover her bloom and her *embonpoint,* now her mind was relieved of its burthen.

"If we remain any longer here, my dear child, it must be on your account Helena, for you are the invalid now," said her anxious mother.

"It is only my mind that suffers, and I am contented to suffer," replied Lady Helena, "as I was the author of my own miseries."

"With a little help," replied her mother, "but I believe you and Lord Restormel were both right, and that you will both be happier separated." Lady Helena still thought differently, but she was silent.

"Yes," resumed the countess, "I have said this in my letter to Lady Restormel."

"Have you written to her and told her all," cried Lady Helena turning pale: "Oh! I hope not!"

"Yes I have, and why not, my dear?"

"Oh! I hoped, I hoped she would die without the pain of knowing that." Here Lady Helena, too painfully affected to say

more, suddenly quitted the room, she had believed Lord Restormel would, if possible, not inform his mother that their union was at an end, if her death was as near as was apprehended, and it was agony to her to reflect that her own image, which was now so precious and bright in the memory of Lady Restormel, would become, probably, odious and overclouded. "Now then," said she to herself, "I had better answer her letter, which, hitherto, I have not been able to do; but I will throw myself on my feelings and what comes from my heart, will go, I flatter myself, directly to her's. She was confirmed in this resolution by a letter from Lady Aston, in which she said, 'Lady Restormel grows rapidly worse; but, I trust, Lord Restormel will arrive to night. She loves to speak of you, and does so with the tenderest affection. She admires as well as loves you, spite of your faults. 'Tell her,' she says, 'that though my nurses are kind and diligent, and one of them is the dear friend of my youth, I miss and pine after that

bright vision which soothed and saved me at Laurel Grove.' 'After this can I hesitate to write?' exclaimed Lady Helena. Still, delicacy and pride suggested objections to her writing; for if she wrote despondingly as well as affectionately, and she could only write as she felt, it would seem, and perhaps to Lord Restormel himself, as if she wished to gain his mother's interference in her favour, that she might be restored to his affection and his confidence. But she at last found out a method of satisfying the claims which the dying mother had on her attention, without forcing herself on the recollection of her son, and that was sending her letter enclosed to Lady Aston, and conjuring her to deliver it privately to Lady Restormel, and only on promise that its being written and delivered should be kept a secret from Lord Restormel. Lady Helena was sure, that not only Sophia's own delicacy would lead her to take every proper precaution to save her's, but that Lady Restormel herself would be honorably careful not to

lower her dignity even in the eyes of her son; accordingly she did venture to throw herself on her feelings, and to write a letter, which would, she trusted, be acceptable to those of the beloved and honored being to whom she wrote. As Lady Erpingham had in her letter disclosed that painful fact which she had wished concealed, Lady Helena thought it best to give Lady Restormel an accurate detail of all the circumstances, that she might do Lord Restormel that justice which he would be likely not to do himself. When she had finished, and sent this letter, her mind was considerably relieved, and it seemed as if her now habitual despondency had given way to hope—yet she would have found it difficult to say on what this hope was founded. When Lord Restormel arrived at Nice, his mother was a little revived, and she eagerly and tenderly enquired how he had left Lady Helena, generously regretting, at the same time, that his affection for her had forced him to leave England and the woman he loved. The hurried, evasive manner in

which Lord Restormel replied to these questions, soon made her suspect that all was not right; and not long after she received Lady Erpingham's letter, saying, that their engagement was dissolved. But Lady Erpingham gave no details; she only expressed her belief that the separation was for the happiness of both parties, and proved their wisdom. Lady Restormel, therefore, could not help naming the subject to her son, though she saw that he wished to avoid discussing it. Accordingly she showed him Lady Erpingham's letter, and begged him to give her all the explanation which she could not now be easy without receiving.

"Oh, spare me, spare me, dearest mother," was his agitated reply, "I am not the wise philosophical being that your friend seems to think me. Let it suffice that we are separated, and for good reasons, and that I do not blame Lady Helena."

He then quitted the apartment in evident distress, and Lady Restormel had not

the heart to resume the subject. In two or three days after, Lady Aston, obeying, in all respects, Lady Helena's injunctions, gave her letter privately to Lady Restormel.

"Dear, rash, but generous girl!" cried she, melting into tears as she read it, "truly have you said, that the mother would have been more indulgent than the son, and that had I been near him, that cold note, dissolving the engagement, would not have been written."

"I shall leave this letter with you," said Lady Aston, "as you mean to answer it; but I rely on your burning it as soon as your answer is written."

"You may trust me," she replied; "I will guard the delicacy and pride of Helena Fortescue as carefully as I would that of my own daughter; and as soon as you leave me, my answer shall be written, and her letter destroyed, though I own" she added, in a faltering voice, "it is most precious to me, and I should like to have kept it till all was over."

Lady Aston left her to fulfil her task, even sooner than she intended, for she was summoned to the little Everard, who was alarmingly worse, and in a few hours the unhappy father and Sophia were, by desire of the physicians, on the road to the baths of Pisa, as the only possible chance to save his wasting life.

"Admirable woman!" said Lady Restormel, as Sophia, having pronounced a hurried, but agonized adieu, had left her alone, "we shall meet no more in this world!"

She then wrote the kindest letter to Lady Helena, assuring her she had not over-rated the indulgence with which she would have viewed her errors, even had their most secret source been revealed, that source which she only hinted at, withheld by shame, as she said, from the disclosure. She also declared her fixed intention to write to her son, conjuring him to reflect on his hasty decision, and to retract it, assuring him that he would repent the surrender of this first and heartfelt attachment, and that he did not make suffi-

cient allowances for a young, beautiful, and admired woman. This letter, she said, he shall not receive till I am no more, and then it will come with added force, as an admonition from the grave. If then, as I suspect, my beloved girl, you still love Restormel, he will soon be with you, and my death will be the means of cementing that union, which it would have gladdened my life to behold. Oh, how welcome will this idea make death to me! But vain, alas, was the generous hope she thus so feelingly ex-expressed; she had scarcely written, sealed, and sent off her letter to the post, and burned Lady Helena's, when all her worst symptoms returned, and when her son came back from a short excursion into the country, he found her last moments rapidly approaching. It was, therefore, impossible for her to write, even one line, as she had kindly intended; and what was still more trying to her, she felt her powers of speaking forsaking her, while her mind retained its consciousness. Warm

and uppermost in that mind was the wish to bring about a reconciliation between her son and Lady Helena; but the desire she felt to do this, defeated its end, by the over-eagerness which it excited. "And hear me, Restormel," she could only say with difficulty, and at intervals. "Obey your dying mother; I know all the faults Lady Helena has committed; I conjure you to ask to see my letter to her—that's enough; and promise me you will no more think of—— oh! no—make my last moments happy by promising me you understand me. I am dying—-speech fails—promise, promise—life— promise;" as she spoke she eagerly grasped his hand, and hung about his neck.

"I do promise solemnly—I promise to obey your will implicitly," was his faint and agitated answer. His mother fixed her eyes on his with a look of joy, while a sweet and benevolent smile played about her lips. The next moment her hands were clasped, and her eyes raised in prayer: "I shall die

happy now," she articulated, with great difficulty, and then fell back a corpse on the bosom of her son.

At first, that most affectionate of children was alive only to the bitter anguish of his loss; but when the earliest agonies of bereaved affection had a little subsided, he reflected with insupportable agony, that, in her care for his happiness, his mother had wrung from him a promise, in her dying moments, that he would never renew his engagement with the faulty Lady Helena; for thus he unfortunately, but naturally, misunderstood the meaning of what she said. And he knew how fondly his heart still yearned towards that erring, but tenderly-beloved being—and how carefully his memory recalled every proof of her love to him. Now, then, said he to himself, I am indeed desolate and alone in the world; I am no longer a son—I can never be a lover or a husband—and I care not how soon my spirit, my broken spirit, is required at the hands of him who gave it.

What a journey, what an agonizing journey was that of Lord Restormel, while he followed the corpse of his mother to England and to the vault of his ancestors.

CHAP. XXIII.

Lady Helena, meanwhile, received, with delighted gratitude, and with a renewal of her fondest hope, the letter of Lady Restormel, though she at the same time wept with affectionate agony over it, as she thought that the generous heart which had dictated it, might, at that very moment, have beaten its last. Nor was it long before her worst fears were confirmed by a letter from Lady Aston; but her best hopes were excited at the same time, and she fully expected that as soon as Lord Restormel had performed every duty to his mother, and her memory, he would either by letter, or in person, renew his addresses, provided he yet retained any feeling of attachment to her. In the meanwhile the pleasure of her home was greatly impaired by the removal of Julia to another residence, as it was evident that propriety required she should do so; since her remaining in Lord

Erpingham's family would expose her to the charge of being on the watch to regain, if she could, the heart and hand of a lover, who appeared in the eyes of the world to have forsaken her for another woman. This was an apparent surrender of her dignity and delicacy, to which no member of Fortescue's family could wish to expose her. She, therefore, chose Mrs. Magnal, who was now a widow, and wanted a companion, for her guardian, and became an inmate of that lady's house, with her own establishment of servants and carriage.

During her town residence, Julia's benevolent nature had prompted her to seek out objects on whom she might, with propriety, bestow some of the vast wealth, which she could not, and wished not to spend upon herself: and very often accompanied by her own woman, one whom she hired of Mrs. Magnal, on discovering the turpitude of the first attendant, she used to visit the poor in the neighbourhood of Portman Square, where she resided, and

bestow on them Bibles and good books, as well as pecuniary favors. In one of these charitable walks she visited a lodger in the second floor of a green-grocer's house, and on her re-entering the shop, the mistress of it, said, "If I may make so bold, madam, I wish to say, that the person you have just visited is not the greatest object of charity in my house. The lodger on the first floor, being a reduced gentlewoman, is far more so."

"But what can I do for her?" replied Julia; "how can I assist a reduced gentlewoman, without wounding her feelings; if I can, I will; but tell me how?"

"Really, madam," said the good woman, "if the want of proper nourishment will not pull down pride, nothing can, and this poor lady is gone, I assure you; for when I told her I knew a rich young lady, who was very kind and charitable, she sighed, and said, 'Well, really, I feel so ill and so hungry, that I am willing to accept medical advice, and food from any one now;' and then, if you did but see her,

madam, she is so beautiful, and seems so unhappy, so penitent-like."

"Penitent!" cried Julia, starting, for the word sounded unpleasant in her ears, but her Christian feelings conquered the involuntary reluctance to see her, which she at first experienced, and Mrs. Tibbs eagerly ran to inform the poor invalid, that the good young lady was coming to visit her.

"I am glad of it," replied she, in a faint voice, "for I am so sunk, so faint for something I could like."

"Then pray walk in directly," said Mrs. Tibbs to Julia, who now entered the room, "you came at the right moment to-day, Miss Villeroy."

"Miss Villeroy!" wildly screamed out the trembling invalid; "Miss Villeroy! no, no, let me rather die, than be obliged to Miss Villeroy."

As she said this, she tried to escape into the next room, but Julia caught her arm, and forcibly detained her, while Mrs. Tibbs said—

"Dear me, Mrs. Tyrawley, why should you not be obliged to Miss Villeroy?"

"I suspected this," said Julia, nearly as pale as the wretched woman whom she held: "Leave us, if you please, Mrs. Tibbs, I find Mrs. Tyrawley does not know me."

As soon as they were alone, Mrs. Tyrawley fell at Julia's feet, and earnestly besought, not her aid, but her pardon.

"You shall have both," Julia replied; a sweet, complacent feeling, struggling with, and overcoming the power of sad and bitter recollections over her heart, and that heart full of thankfulness to Heaven for being thus permitted to have an opportunity of returning good for evil.

Long and affecting was the conversation which now took place. Lucy, won by the gentle kindness and Christian benevolence of Julia, told her the whole of her sad story. That, expecting to marry Fortescue, she had ran in debt, and having strong reasons to wish to avoid selling any of her principal, she had been forced to

pay her debts by instalments out of her small income, and had, therefore, not enough to procure herself advice or sufficient food; but she had nearly resolved to sell some of her few remaining hundreds, when Mrs. Tibbs had declared she would procure her assistance: "But little did I think," said Lucy, "that the good young lady was one whom I had endeavoured so cruelly to injure!" Julia found that what she had heard (but did not like to believe) was true. That Lady Villeroy had been convinced by Aubrey that he had spoken of her as he did only to blind the jealousy of Mrs Tyrawley—that she had married him secretly, having, however, taken care to tie up the greatest part of her fortune, and secure even her income to herself; that they had then gone abroad, and a few weeks afterwards Aubrey had left her, and was living on that part of the income which he could call his own, with a beautiful French girl, whom he had met on the continent, and that Lady Villeroy, almost

broken-hearted, was on her way to England.

"Does he know of your distress?"

"Oh, yes."

"And has he not sent you any relief?"

"No; he is too much engrossed with his new love to think of me."

Here she begged leave to change the conversation, as it brought on her difficulty of breathing. I shall only add, that Julia procured the wretched woman advice, and a nurse, and provided her with all she wanted. She also was unremitting in her visits to her, and by the time that Mrs. Tyrawley took to that bed from which she was never to rise again, it was with feelings of spiritual comfort such as she had never expected to experience, and which she owed to the kindness of Julia, and to the attendance of the amiable clergyman whom she prevailed upon to visit the penitent and dying sinner.

"What has happened to you, Julia?" said Lady Helena to her one day. "There

is an expression in your countenance every now and then, a sort of Heavenly expression, even though your eyes fill with tears, which I never saw in it before. Have you had a vision to tell you you are soon to be removed to Heaven ?"

" No, Helena ; but I have reason to think that I have been chosen as the humble instrument to send another sinner thither, and that makes me weep, though I am a fool to weep for what I am glad of."

" And pray whio is this brand plucked from the burning ?"

" Go with me to visit her, and I will tell you, most willingly." They instantly set off for Mrs. Tyrawley's lodgings.

" Oh ! Miss Villeroy, I am so glad you are come," cried Mrs. Tibbs, " the poor soul has been so bad ! poor Mrs. Tyrawley, I thought she was gone !"

" Mrs. Tyrawley," cried Lady Helena, " is it she ?" bursting into tears, while she gazed on the benign and touching countenance of Julia, as she said, " Will you not see her Helena ?"

"Oh, yes," was her reply, as she caught Julia's hand to her lips, and followed her in silence to the chamber.

"Here is Lady Helena Fortescue come to visit you," said Julia, kindly; "will you see her?"

"Oh! how good she is! see her! yes, did I not bear to see you?" Lady Helena now stood at the foot of the bed, and almost started at seeing the wreck of what she had once known as consummate beauty!

"Lady Helena! can you forgive all the uneasiness I have given your family?" said Lucy, clasping her hands together. "And will you prevail on your noble brother to pardon all my wicked conduct towards him?"

"He has pardoned it, I dare say, already."

"But, where is he? if I could but see him! but as he is not in England I know that would be impossible; besides, I am not worthy to inflict such pangs as the sight of me would occasion him." She then told Lady Helena, what she had be-

fore told Julia, that, spite of appearances, she had never really transgressed the bounds of chastity; but not, she owned, from either moral or religious restraint, but from the dread of lowering herself still more in the eyes of that man whom she had loved with such fatal and ill-requited tenderness. "He scorned my weakness in loving him," said she, "and despised my fidelity; but I could bear it all while I knew that he never did, nor ever should reproach me with any criminal indulgencies, and one day I hoped that my persevering, and I may say pure love, would have touched his heart, and that he would have married me; but he is now the husband of another, and I, I am on my death-bed!" Lady Helena and Julia were both excessively affected at this proof of the persevering nature of woman's love; though, as Lady Helena afterwards observed, where the affections are not under the regulation of religion and moral restraint, this faithful love is little better than a bad habit; they were also relieved

to find that the poor invalid was not as guilty as she might have been.

"We will see you again to-morrow," said Julia, when they rose to take leave.

"To-morrow! there will be no to-morrow here for me," replied Lucy.

"Then I will return again to-night."

"Blessings on you," said Lucy, "I shall then depend on seeing you; I know you would not leave your work of mercy uncompleted."

"You shall not return alone Julia," said Lady Helena, "I will accompany you." At night, just as the friends were setting off on their task of Christian love, a message arrived from Mrs. Tibbs to hasten their arrival. Lucy was sensible when they came, and her dying eyes lighted up with pleasure at sight of them, the clergyman, Julia's friend, was only just gone, and Lucy declared her mind to be freed of its terrors from the conviction that He, who died for man, was mighty to save, even to the uttermost. Julia threw herself on the bed beside her, and

raised her in her arms, and Lady Helena grasped her cold hand in her's, while the weeping Mrs. Tibbs stood at the foot of the bed; the struggle was not long, and a deep silence succeeded the last groan, broken only by the sobs of the kind-hearted landlady; Julia had fallen on her knees, and had hidden her face with her hands, while Lady Helena stood in silent, tearful contemplation of that being reposing in death, who was once so beautiful, and once so dear, so perniciously dear to the heart of her brother, and who by a singular ordination of retributive justice, was doomed to owe the comforts of her last days, hours, and moments, to the forgiving excellence of the woman whom she had most injured.

"The poor thing, I found, had no near relations in England, and no friends," said Julia, as she perused a paper given her by the dying woman, "therefore I shall not be sorry to have to execute her will; see," said she, "and if any thing can touch that

hard heart, this must; she preferred receiving alms to selling her little remaining property, that she might leave it entire to Mr. Aubrey, the interest to accumulate in my hands till he is in want, which she says he will be she knows, some time or other, so great is his extravagance; and here is a letter to him to tell him what she has done. Tell me, Helena, is there not something that one respects in this power of forgiving love?"

"Certainly."

"I am glad you say so; for I rejoice to be able to admire any thing in one so dear to your brother!"

"But if you admire this forgiving love in her, how much more must Marcus admire your's, which is of a much higher nature—your pure Christian love, Julia! what think you will Marcus say of that!"

"Nay, nay, talk not of weak earthly love in a scene like this, and while gazing on that poor, pale victim of it, for she told me Aubrey's cruelty at length broke

her heart—but there is yet another duty to perform:" as she said this, she gently closed the eyes of the dead.

"Julia," said Lady Helena, with efforts and broken accents, as she led her away from the chamber, her eyes blinded with no unpleasant tears, "I have been told that that is an office which it is soothing to the hand of fond affection to perform; but I am inclined to believe that your feelings, on reflection, for having performed it to a departed enemy, will be far more soothing, more enviable still."

Sweet and tranquillizing that night were the slumbers of both the friends, though they rose the next day to a renewal of tender and secret anxieties, but more particularly Lady Helena, for Julia knew Marcus was well—that he loved her, and longed earnestly for the time when he was again to be admitted to her presence; she also felt that, now the poor Lucy was no more, one obstacle to her complete happiness, as the wife of Fortescue, was for ever removed; but Lady Helena, too rest

less to remain long in a place, returned that day to Laurel Grove, yet not before she was provoked to some of her usual smiles, by Mrs. Magnal's comically expressed astonishment, at finding that the object of Julia's kindnesses and visits, and of Lady Helena's attendant sympathy, was that vile hussy who had used her so wickedly.

"This surprise comes of your aversion to reading," said Lady Helena, "you never look into a book, I believe."

"Indeed but I do; I read my Testament and my Prayer-book every Sunday," she replied.

"Indeed! then did you never read the Lord's prayer in them, and that forgiveness of injuries was a Christian's duty?"

"Lady Helena," cried the old lady, angrily, "I cannot argue with you, you are so wise and learned, child! but, I am sure it was almost wicked in Miss Villeroy to be so good to a vile hussy, whom the Almighty had so properly punished, as if she knew better than he."

Well, indeed, might poor Lady Helena

be restless and uneasy, for months succeeded to months, and no Lord Restormel came or wrote; she therefore naturally concluded that he had disregarded his mother's dying letter, because he loved her no longer. At this period, Lady Villeroy arrived in England, miserable, forlorn, and ill; and it was not long before she was indelicate and selfish enough to request that Julia would come and stay with her, and help to nurse her into health. Julia obeyed the summons in spite of a repetition of Mrs. Magnal's theological objections to such kindness to such a woman; and a friend of Mrs. Magnal's came to stay with her in Julia's absence. But, to return to Lord Restormel; when he had followed the remains of his beloved mother to the grave, he found Green Hills so desolate that he resolved to travel, but his mind had been so incessantly preying on his health, that he was seized with an alarming illness, and had several relapses; as the cause of his illness still continued, he was for months confined to his own house,

and during this enforced solitude, one single flash of light shone on the darkness of his mind.—Had he not misunderstood his mother's dying words? could so generous a woman have died with such a gleam of satisfied benevolence in her countenance, when she must have seen how reluctantly, and with what agony he gave the promise she asked? What could be the nature of her letter to Lady Helena, which she desired him to ask to see? and if he was not on terms with Lady Helena, how could he hope to see it; but then, the next minute, he concluded that this letter was one bequeathing, as it were, her prohibition of the union to Lady Helena, and shewing her how wisely she had acted in giving him up and not answering his letter, and that his mother thought Lady Aston could procure him a sight of it. Unfortunately, he did not see Lord and Lady Aston before he left Italy, and since then Sophia had been too much taken up with the dying Everard to write to or think of him; but whether this hope came to cheer

or to deceive him, he was resolved to go to London and see Miss Villeroy.

On the evening of his arrival he went to a coffee-house, which was opposite to a house lighted up, and crowded with brilliant company. As the evening was warm, the windows were thrown up, and some of the ladies came into the balcony. There were gentlemen at the door of the coffee-house, commenting on the ladies, as they appeared in sight, and one gentleman said to the other, "I declare, there is that once beautiful girl, Lady Helena Fortescue! How she is gone off! It is quite a wonder to see her at a party! but I see she is out of mourning."

"Who was she in mourning for?"

"For a cousin, it is said; but the mourning was so deep, that every body suspected it was from a feeling of respect for that haughty duchess Lady Restormel; for, they say, she pines after Restormel still."

"Indeed! well, perhaps so, for I find she has again refused Lord L., and Nether-

by also, but Lord Clanross is allowed to dangle after her; and it is said she will at last marry him if Restormel does not come forward again."

"Why did that go off?"

"I will tell you what I have heard as we walk along, for it is time to go over the way, and I wish to get there before Lady Helena goes, as I love to look at her."

So do I, thought Lord Restormel, hastening to the door, his heart agitated and softened to an almost unbearable degree by this conversation. She was still in the balcony, but alone there; and as the moon shone on her pale face, he thought he had never seen her so touchingly beautiful, so interestingly lovely!

And was such a woman to be resigned without an effort, and for why? on account of a mysterious, dying request of his mother, which he probably had misunderstood. Impossible! as she had worn mourning for his mother; and after staying to look at Lady Helena, till she disappeared leaning on the arm of Lord

Clanross, he went home, resolved to call on Miss Villeroy the next day.

In the meanwhile Lady Helena, who had come to London merely for that party, which was held at the house of a near relation, returned the next day to Laurel Grove, little thinking her lover had been so near her.

Lord Restormel kept his resolution, and called, though with a beating heart, on Julia at Lady Villeroy's. Julia received him with a warmer welcome than he expected, and than perhaps his treatment of her friend warranted; but she was then living where she was much tried in every respect, and the sight of Lord Restormel brought with it tender and dear recollections which warmed her heart towards him. She had just heard also some pleasing intelligence of Marcus, and of his feelings on hearing of her conduct to Mrs. Tyrawley, which Lady Helena had communicated to her in a letter that day; and her heart was so opened, that on Lord Restormel's venturing to ask if she could

tell him where Marcus was, and whether their engagement was renewed, he led her to give him some particulars of the whole affair; but, as Lady Villeroy summoned her away, she was forced to put off telling him the rest till the next evening, when she wished him to call, as then Lady Villeroy would be gone to bed. He came; and Julia, attended by her servant, walked with him in the Regent's Park. Again and again he came, both in the morning and evening; and again Julia and he walked in the same scene, but still he dared not name the subject nearest his heart, withheld by the dread of having his fears confirmed; and Julia was withheld by delicacy from naming her friend to him. But these walks and meetings had been observed and talked about. Mrs. Seebright wrote word to Lady Helena that Lord Restormel was in town, and there was no doubt but that he was courting Miss Villeroy, as they were always together. At this intelligence—at the idea that the intimacy and attachment which she always

dreaded, had taken place, Lady Helena felt that she had never suffered till now; for now jealousy, and well-founded jealousy too, had taken possession of her heart!—to remain at Laurel Grove, was impossible; and as Mrs. Magnal was not well, and missed Julia, she had a sufficient excuse for hastening to London. When there, she made a desperate effort, and called directly on Julia, who seemed, she thought, embarrassed and hurried in her manner, and did not name Lord Restormel.

Before they parted Lady Helena said, "Have you nothing interesting to communicate to me?"

"Not now, but I very soon may have," was Julia's blushing reply, "and something you little think of."

"Indeed!" was Lady Helena's answer, as she hurried into her carriage. When there, she gave way to an agony of feeling, for were not Julia's words confirmatory of her apprehensions?

That evening she consented to accom-

pany Mrs. Seebright in a drive to the Regent's Park, to enable her to detect (as that lady said,) her perfidious friend at once. They did, and saw Julia and Lord Restormel, who were so engrossed with each other, that the carriage passed unheeded by them! Oh! the surpassing agony of that moment to Lady Helena. But her trials had taught her a lesson of humility; and while she humbled herself that night, before the being who thus chastised her, she reflected that both Julia and Lord Restormel were free to love and to marry; that Julia was not aware she still loved Lord Restormel, as she had forbidden her even to name him to her, and she knew that she had been prevailed on to let Lord Clanross try his chance of success with her. Julia was, therefore, not to blame; and, perhaps, she meant to confide in her the next time they met.

"Well, then, let me go to her, and end my suspense at once," said Lady Helena! "for to live thus is impossible!"

It so happened, that Lord Restormel

had mentioned the long dreaded subject to Julia, on the morning on which Lady Helena had called; and though Julia had been summoned away very soon, he went home relieved, and almost happy; he was to return in the evening, to walk in the Park, as usual, and he did so; and was so engrossed by the joy of hearing what his mother's letter was, and Julia, in witnessing that joy, that neither he nor Julia saw or heard any thing.

"I will get my copy of the letter and show you," said she.

"Not for the world," he replied—"she shall not suppose that aught but my own heart carries me to her;" and he called the next day to ask Julia to accompany him to Mrs. Magnal's; Julia had promised to go with him, and prepare Lady Helena to receive him with such prompt kindness, that, in a transport of grateful joy, as he sat by her on the sofa, he raised her hand passionately to his lips.

At this moment Lady Helena, who had walked to Gloucester Place, and had found

the door open, and no servant to announce her, entered the room! At sight of this tender familiarity, she started, staggered, and exclaiming, "Then it is so!" would have fallen to the earth, had not Lord Restormel caught her and carried her to the sofa. When she recovered, and found where her head reclined, she started up; but, making a great effort, she seized a hand of each, and joining them together, lifted up her eyes to heaven, faintly saying, "Heaven bless you together!" and attempted to leave the room; but Julia quitted the room before her, and she felt she was detained by the grasp of Lord Restormel, who, bearing her back to the sofa, exclaimed, "Oh, Helena! my own Helena! my only love! could you, for a moment, suspect that I loved another woman?"

Surprised, gratified, overpowered, Lady Helena leaned against the bosom of her lover; and when Julia returned to them at the end of two hours, all was explained; past misery made amends for; and present happiness, encreased by the conscious-

ness that more was now in store for them.

"Oh, Miss Villeroy!" cried Lord Restormel, "how hard it was that my second letter should be received, and not my first:" "I, on the contrary, believe, that on all occasions, every thing is for the best."

"My dear Lord," replied Julia, "this enforced separation has proved the constancy of you both; and the misery which my dear friend has experienced---misery, self-inflicted, as she has always humbly called it, has taught her a lesson, by which she will be benefitted in future."

"But then, had my letter been received, my dear mother would have died happy in the conviction that we should be united!"

"She did die happy then," cried Lady Helena, "for she certainly believed that you understood her, and that you promised to reconcile yourself to me. Oh! dear Restormel! presume not for one moment to question the mercy and the wisdom of him who over-rules all events for our good, if we could and would but think so!"

"I do feel it, and I own that I have great pleasure in thinking that the misery which some undetected carelessness in my agent, to whom I gave my letter, inflicted on me, gave me an opportunity of proving my obedience to the will and wishes of the best of parents, at even the very last moment of her consciousness; she deserved such submission from me, and this recollection will cheer me to the last hour of my existence."

"After all," said Lady Helena, trying to turn Lord Restormel's attention from the recollection of a scene which even yet had power to unman his filial heart, "I am the only person who have reason to repine, because what I have endured has made me so ugly. When we parted, Restormel, I was in the pride of my beauty."

"Yes, and also in the pride of your heart, Helena! and that pride destroyed the power of your beauty over my heart. Foolish girl! you treated me as if I were a mere sensualist! and as if my moral sense was not superior to my other senses! Oh,

Helena, what dependence could you or any other woman have on the love and fidelity of a man who could be fascinated by the charms of a woman into a comparative disregard of her mental and moral qualities! and my resentment of what you did, and looked at Clifton, was a homage to your real worth, which was worthy your acceptance! but I am sure you feel on this subject as I do, and I shrink from any renewal of it as a degradation to you, which you have risen above."

"Generous and kind, and like yourself! but come, let us give our high-flown feeling a little set down by going to my present hostess, good Mrs. Magnal; I am sure she will pull down all our heroics," said Lady Helena. Accordingly they set off for Grosvenor Square; when they arrived there, Lady Helena feelingly exclaimed—"Oh how much happier do I return than when I left this house!" Mrs. Magnal eagerly pressed forward to tell Lady Helena how glad she was to see her returned, and how long she had thought her absence,

as she had promised to return soon; but her welcome died away on her lips when she saw Lord Restormel, and she sunk back on her seat in amazed silence; at last, however, his kind enquiries after her health, wrung from her some gracious enquiries in return; but after earnestly regarding him and Lady Helena, she exclaimed—"Grant me patience! what two fine-looking young persons, I remember you! but now, I declare my lord, you look with your black dress and pale face just like an undertaker, and Lady Helena—"

"Like an undertaker's wife, I hope," he replied, raising Lady Helena's hand to his lips.

"Dear me! well is it possible, after such strange doings! but I know that young people will have their own way, and strange ways they often are. Oh! poor, dear Lord Clanross! but I conclude, Lady Helena, you mean to consult your father."

"To be sure, and I too," said Lord Restormel.

"Well, luckily Lord and Lady Er-

pingham are coming to town to-day, and are to dine *en famille* with me."

"*En famille!* then I fear I must not expect to be admitted, but after dinner I trust I may request an audience of the earl.

"Nay, before I trust, and if my father invites you, I trust our dear friend here will not exclude you from our table."

"No, certainly not, if he invites you my lord; but if he does, he is more forgiving than I am," replied the ingenuous old lady, and Lord Restormel withdrew. It is almost unnecessary to add that Lord Erpingham received Lord Restormel's communications with complacency, and that the latter dined *en famille* at Mrs. Magnal's; but nothing could induce Lady Villeroy to allow Julia to join the party. She declared that she should die if she were to leave her, as she felt herself so decidedly worse that any contradiction would kill her. In vain, therefore, did Julia's friends try to convince her that she was weakly forging unnecessary fetters for herself in thus in-

dulging the tyrannical caprice of one who had no claims either on her love or her duty; and who had, on the contrary, done all in her power to imbitter to her the hours of childhood and of youth; and what, said they, could you do more for a fond, excellent, and beloved parent.

"Oh, much more!" she replied, "for I should love such a parent, and then the sacrifice would be no sacrifice, but a pleasure; but the less poor Lady Villeroy deserves of me the more I feel it right in me to oblige her, especially as, if I do not, nobody else will."

Happy are those who are habituated to make a little surrender of their own will, convenience and pleasure, from consideration for the comfort, or even caprice of others. They have a secret satisfaction in so doing, and in so having done, far beyond any gratification which the pleasure they surrender could have imparted; and Julia, while engaged in administering to the comfort of her unamiable mother-in-

law, felt, I doubt not, more heartfelt satisfaction than she would have enjoyed in the society which she loved.

But Fortescue now ventured to return, and Julia consented to see him; nor was it long before she also consented to be his bride on the day that should unite his friend to Lady Helena; but Lady Villeroy hoped they would wait till she was no more; and Julia felt the sense of her duty, therefore, tired to the uttermost, when the unexpected return of Aubrey—returned, he hypocritically said, to nurse his dear, but injured wife himself—made it imperative on Julia to leave Gloucester Place, and with the full approbation of the flattered, duped, and jealous mistress of the house. Aubrey did stay with her, and did nurse her in order to regain, if possible, possession of her confidence, and thereby of her money and valuables; and having done so, in a degree, he took advantage of her first quarrel with him to leave her again. The consequence to her was fatal, she broke a blood-vessel by the violent paroxysm of

rage to which she gave way, and died soon after, but not before Julia reached the house, whom she was very desirous of seeing, and to whom she expressed the most affectionate gratitude for all her kindness, imploring, at the same, time her forgiveness for all that she had ever done to wound or distress her. "I have not deserved such goodness from you, and to die here," she faintly murmured, as Julia tenderly raised her in her arms. She spoke no more, but with her head on Julia's bosom she gently breathed her last.

To the joy of every one, her vile husband was not named in her will, which was of recent date, but, with the exception of a few legacies, she left every thing to Julia, who feelingly observed, "You see this poor soul had a heart alive to kindness, and how glad I am that I was not prevailed upon to leave her, or to refuse to indulge even her caprices."

"Mercenary wretch! no doubt you are glad," cried Lady Helena, "for I see now you were legacy-hunting—there's a dear

girl; do not say what you have just said to any one but me, all things considered." And Julia, who was amused herself by her own equivocal observation, promised to say no more.

Lord and Lady Aston returned to England, having lost the dear object of so many months of anxious solicitude; but the little Everard had not long been buried when Lady Aston gave birth to a son, another Everard; and Lord Erpingham could not help owning, that much as he loved and regretted the first heir, he was not sorry to have the future representative of his house born of a woman who had moral and mental qualities of the first order to transmit to her descendants, and who would be able to form their infant minds to virtue,—for he well knew that, generally speaking, where men or women are distinguished for mental and moral excellences, they have had, for the most part, a wise and virtuous mother. It may be as well for me to notice the fate of the other characters named in these pages, and to say

that Mansfeldt was at last thrown into the King's Bench, where he formed an acquaintance with a widow lady, and which he intended to break off as soon as he and she should, by an act of grace, obtain their liberty: but as a marriage was become necessary to save the lady's reputation, he was forced to marry her by a bullying brother. The consequence was, that when by an unexpected legacy he was able to shew his face in some of the second-rate circles in which he had been formerly known, he soon found, that though he was willing enough to leave at home a wife who was too ignorant and too vulgar for him to take abroad with him, she was not willing to be left, and that in order to enjoy any sort of domestic peace he must quit England, and drag his chain in a foreign country. There he resumed his habit of gaming, was again a beggar, and was likely to end his days in a foreign prison.

Aubrey soon realized those fears, for his pecuniary embarrassments which the

affectionate fears of Mrs. Tyrawley had anticipated, and her careful affection had provided against;—and on a certification of his poverty, Julia paid into his hands, by means of her agent, the principal and interest of the sum left him by that unhappy woman. But they were soon squandered like the rest of his property, and, in a fit of despair, his own rash hand deprived him of that life which the gallows had spared.

Mrs. Benson soon contrived nearly to ruin her husband, and on what remained of their property they were forced to reside in a foreign country.

Netherby, on Lady Helena's marriage, joined his declining and destitute father in America, and sought the best remedy for any affliction—the fulfilment of a sacred duty; and by administering to the comfort of his erring parent, he, no doubt, ultimately secured his own.

Lord Clanross fell in love with a new beauty, and at length made her his wife. And soon after the arrival of Lord and

Lady Aston in England, Lady Helena was united to Lord Restormel, and Fortescue at the same time received the hand of Julia Villeroy.

THE END.

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